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THE WORKS OF
CHARLES LAMB

EDITED BY
WILLIAM MACDONALD

IN TWELVE VOLUMES
VOL. II

THE LAST ESSAYS OF ELIA

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CHARLES LAMB

From a Drawing by Hancock (1798) in the Poſſeſſion of Mr. Cottle

THE LAST ESSAYS OF ELIA

BY

CHARLES LAMB

WITH A MEMOIR AND NOTES

BY

WILLIAM MACDONALD



WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

BY

C. L. BROCK

LONDON

[illegible]

NEW YORK: E. P. DUTTON & CO

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CHARLES LAMB

IN the early part of the Eighteenth Century there lived a family named Lamb in the town of Stamford, in Lincolnshire: a stout journey from London, as distances went then, and very far from the trees in Temple Garden, and the cloisters, and the pump in Hare Court. The Lambs seem to have been in well-to-do, though probably not affluent circumstances; and had this state of middle prosperity continued, it is a great chance we should never have heard of them. But trouble broke in; and there were losses; and a removal of the domicile to Lincoln; and therewith some scattering of the household. It is with this cloud upon its fortunes that a family which the whole world has taken most dearly to its heart first comes within our knowledge, and dawns, through poverty and, it may be, worse disaster, into the twilight of its fame.

At the character of the disaster a guess may be hazarded later; sufficient to note here that, in the general disburdening, a mere child—a little boy of seven—had to leave his home and go up to service in London. Some interest in the world, however, perhaps some ancient equal friendship in better days, had still so much effect in favour of the distressed and driven family that little John Lamb was sold to no metropolitan chimney-sweep nor caught into that infant band of house-top Pulpiteers toward whom Elia had so kindly a heart, so quaint and searching a sympathy. The little lad had a servant's

position in some friendly house at first, but more than a servant's share of interest bestowed upon him, and much more than an ordinary servant's education and furtherance in life provided. He was put in a way to fill that position in which we find him, more than forty years later, of a barrister's clerk. More accurately, he was to Samuel Salt, Esq., of the Inner Temple, when we find him, "at once his clerk, his good servant, his dresser, his friend, his 'flapper,' his guide, stop-watch, auditor, treasurer." His son, who so describes him, under the name of Lovel, in one of the Essays, tells us also of his mercurial vivacity, his many dexterities and accomplishments, his multifarious giftedness in the little ways of doing things and being good company. Yet of all his gifts the best and the worst was this—that he was "a man of an incorrigible and losing honesty. A good fellow withal, and would strike," never counting odds in the cause of the oppressed, but as ready to flush with a generous indignation as to make a joke or a jingle of rhymes.

It was scarcely more than he deserved, that to this gay and admirable fellow should have been born a son who was to write, some day, the Essays of Elia: in which so much serious character and incorrigible honesty of mind comes to us distilled into sweetness and mirth, and in which humour becomes, perhaps for the first time in literature, not only an occasion for enjoyment but a cause of love.

Charles Lamb was born in the Inner Temple on February 10, 1775; John Lamb, with his wife and two children, being then domiciled as part of the establishment of Samuel Salt, and occupying one of the two suites of rooms tenanted by that worthy Old Bencher of the Inner Temple at No. 2 Crown Office Row. John Lamb seems to have married somewhat late in life; and of seven children born to him,

Charles was the youngest, almost the child of his old age. Of the other six, only two grew up; the younger John, who was twelve years old, and Mary, who was ten, when Charles was born. Besides those three children and their parents, there was another member of the close-packed little family. This was Aunt Hetty, an unmarried sister of John Lamb, who had a small annuity, the instalments of which were her contribution to the family funds. She is an interesting figure, this Aunt Hetty; and that annuity of hers is interesting also, seeming to open a glimpse into the half-light of an earlier time. Very little is known, to be sure; but I think there is ground enough for an inference that this annuity of Aunt Hetty's was something saved from the wreck—or recovered from it later—what time the Lambs moved to Lincoln early in the century. However that be, here is the certainty regarding Aunt Hetty herself which is important for us. "I had an Aunt, a dear and good one. She was one whom single blessedness had soured to the world. She often used to say that I was the only thing in it which she loved; and, when she thought I was quitting it, she grieved over me with a mother's tears." So if we step forward three or four years, to the great nutritive and formative period of life, we see the brown-eyed, gentle-natured little lad—still "trailing clouds of glory" and full of wonder—taking his bearings in a strange but kindly world in which he had three mothers provided for him. First, there was the mother who bore him, and who loved him, to be sure, but on this side motherly foolishness, as all accounts go to show. Next there was Aunt Hetty, who, I think, loved him better; with an unreasoning silent partiality, a watchful jealousy and protection, ever anticipating neglect of that child, ever making neglect utterly impossible. Lastly, his

sister Mary; whose affection and care of him, then and all through life, was only equalled by that life-long sacrifice and devotion of his in return, with which he repaid so amply, what he thought he never could repay enough—

> The mighty debt of love I owe,
> Mary, to thee, my Sister and my friend!

Mary, I have said, was ten years old when Charles was born, and it must soon have become evident that his arrival in their circle was an event in her life even more than in that of her parents. She was a sensitive, moodish, dreamy girl, affectionate, but feeling lonely, and with forebodings of a cloud to fall upon her some day. Her parents had but an imperfect sympathy with a nature so unlike their own—happy-tempered as they both were, and fond of the more sunny aspect of things and the merrier ways of wasting an hour—and Mary's "moythered brains," as her grandmother in the country called them, were an object of wondering or impatient remark rather than of sympathetic study. Add to this that her brother John—"dear little selfish craving John"—was and would have been his mother's favourite in any case, and we may understand how the young girl—with a heart almost morbid with impulses to affection and a desire to be dearly and explicitly loved (and not without a prophetic sense, surely, that she would have need of that safety and protection in the terrible time to come upon her yet)—how she may have felt lonely enough in that close-packed household of "snug fire-sides, low-built roofs, parlours ten feet by ten, frugal boards, and all the homeliness of home." But with the arrival of the little brother, the loneliness was gone, and the love began to come in with a tide that never ebbed again.

The first seven years of Charles Lamb's life were

thus passed : in the bosom of his family, in the midst of the Temple, in the heart of London. And if we try to picture him in those early scenes—whether it be the little boy at play in the Temple Garden or on his way to Mr Bird's Academy for Young Gentlemen in Fetter Lane (where they taught reading and writing, and where the infant Charles by and by won a prize for spelling)—Mary is never far off. But a time came when, the child being strongly built in love and book-learning, they had to let him go altogether for a season, that he might come back stronger still in one gift and not weakened in the other. So behold him, one day in October 1782, the centre of a wondering domestic group, with Aunt Hetty to

> peruse him round and round
> And hardly know him in his yellow coats,
> Red leathern belt, and gown of russet blue!

What did this portent mean? It meant that a presentation to Christ's Hospital had been secured for the worthy clerk's little son (one of the many kind acts of Samuel Salt towards that family) and that Charles was now a Blue-coat Boy ;[1] admitted member of an historic corporation with many privileges, especially the privilege of a peculiar partiality and respect, which goes out to meet the Blue-coat Boy wherever he appears, all over Britain, not more in England than in Scotland, in Cornwall than in

[1] I have given in this sketch the tale of Charles Lamb's schooling as it is usually told ; first his infant-school instruction at Mr Bird's Academy, then his seven years at Christ's Hospital. But in a Note to the preceding volume (p. 314), I have called attention, for the first time, I believe, to a curious agreement between a passage in one of the Essays and another in one of the Letters, which affords a presumption, at least, that he had been at some kind of institutional or boarding-school in South London for a term or two before the presentation to Christ's Hospital was secured.

Caithness. As they say in the latter country, John Lamb was a proud man that day; and we can dimly imagine what the emotions of the women were. The dress itself, without the idea—the visible symbol, the investiture—would be eloquent for them!

Our knowledge of the next seven years is mainly derived from the two essays on Christ's Hospital, but is vitally supplemented by the reminiscences of some school contemporaries, written at a later time. The indications which the latter give, being always consistent with what he tells us of the boy and what we know of the man, have supplied just what was wanting to fix our sense of the scene. So it comes that Charles Lamb's Schooldays is a period of history—half visionary, half mythologic, perhaps before the Flood, or altogether out of time—of which a recollection, or a vague concomitant consciousness, hovers in the mind always when reading him, whatever be the year of his life more immediately before our minds. Perhaps it is from Lamb himself that one gets this disposition. For he had a most tender heart toward the boy Elia, a most explicit respect for that young master: and he asks in one place whether it is not some weakness in his constitution which inclines him "to cling to the recollections of childhood so obstinately"—confessing that "in an inverted ratio to the usual sentiment of mankind, nothing that I have been engaged in since seems of any value or importance compared to the colours which imagination gave to everything then." So also, quite late in life, when speaking of the death of one who was a friend of his boyhood, he exclaims that he has only made foolish friendships since!

Not quite that, perhaps; but one friendship he made in those Christ's Hospital days, in which, more than in any other, outside of family affections, the wisdom and strength of his nature were gathered

and there rested for a lifetime: his friendship with that young Mirandula of the city cloisters, the inspired charity-boy of Christ's, Samuel Taylor Coleridge; whose wonderful powers of seeing and saying were one day to be caught into a cloud and so lost to the general world, but whom Lamb remembered always as he knew him first—"in the dayspring of his fancies, with hope like a fiery column before him!" Coleridge was but two and a half years older than Lamb, and entered the school at the same time; and as he was not advanced to the rank of a Grecian till 1788, they must have moved in the same region of the school world, and had their studies, or neglect of studies, in common during almost the whole of Lamb's time at Christ's. But though they were almost of an age, and might have their routine school-work in common, there was no pretence of parity in the mental status of those two class-mates. For what, after all, have the protracted trivialities called school-lessons to do with the operations of dawning genius? or what matter a few months more or less of mundane experience, in estimating the knowledge of a Seer? Coleridge was older than Lamb by the centuries of essential knowledge, or of cosmic confidence, which his avid young intelligence had gathered, no matter where: by that more than adult acquaintance with the things of thought—that proleptic apprehension of advanced and complex states of mind—in which he came nearer to repeating the phenomenon of Rousseau's boyhood, with its immense clairvoyant sensibility, than any one else has done, hardly excepting Balzac himself, that other visionary boy and infant omnivore of books. It was, then, to Charles Lamb—already marked among his schoolmates for a peculiar gentleness and quiet, and felt to be somehow more innocent, more a child than the rest, so

that he alone in the school was never mentioned without his Christian name—it was a heavenly benevolence of chance, if of no Wiser Power, which brought him acquainted at that age with such a mind: a mind almost coæval with his own, but projective, abounding, confident, full of meanings and imaginings, and already entered upon a kind of boy-citizenship of the intellectual world—that world of great and timeless and disinterested things—toward which his own nature, by the fineness and purity of its organisation, tended with a blind and mute affinity, as a flower tends to the sun and the atmosphere in which it shall achieve itself some day.

Thus there were at work, during the seven years of Lamb's residence at Christ's Hospital, three great influences that contributed to give his mind its peculiar tone, or confirmed its inherent tendencies. There was the mediæval atmosphere of the entire school-life, both scenery and routine: there was his friendship with that young dialectician and mystic, as of the Middle Ages, Samuel Taylor Coleridge: there were, finally, those frequent afternoon and whole-day leaves, which he spent for the most part in that other mediæval scene, his home within the Temple precincts. These lines of influence all converged; and they united in making for seriousness, for self-respect, and for quiet. They made also for a certain markedness, a distinction or separation from the mental habits of the crowd; and to this we may trace a certain note in him, that is neither aristocratic nor yet cleric, but which at the same time is neither quite of the people nor even quite of the laity. We can catch this note in him the better, and understand it the more easily, when we remember that the first fourteen years of his life were passed, as has been finely said, "between cloister and cloister," and that whether at school, or at home in the Temple, he

moved always in a scene of things which had a very large connotation, and which carried the thoughts beyond the sphere of mere individuality or mere domesticity, back into the mellow past of England's history, or outward into the constitutional and interpretive functions of the national life. In a word, Charles Lamb—however poor, and however simple his social station might be—never looked out upon the world with the eyes of the ordinary private British person, who has, as such, the key to no house but his own, and inhabits his own street and no other. He belonged—how shall I express it?—to an Order, and so was more than only himself; had become the inheritor of an uninvidious and essentially mental or cultural tradition which liberated him from the limitations of mere Class, whether high or low. Another influence, in the same way informing his early moods and liberating his intelligence from the partialities of accident, falls to be noted: namely, frequent visits of some weeks' duration to his maternal grandmother, Mrs Field, who for more than fifty years was housekeeper at Blakesware, the seat of the Plumers in Hertfordshire. The Plumers had almost forsaken their old home, however, so that during a great part of the time Mrs Field's position was less that of a servant than that of tenant and sole mistress of the mansion committed to her care. Thither Charles was brought in his early years; and thither he returned periodically till his Grandame's death in 1792. And first and last he never ceased to draw nurture and knowledge—afterwards to give strength and charm to many an Elian Essay—from the enchanted tranquillity that reigned in that world always; from the living works of art—busts of Roman Emperors, Hogarthian Prints, storied tapestries more eloquent than Ovid's verse—which spoke to him in hall and corridor; above all, from the many empty

spaces of the great old House, and the uninvaded peace of the fields around it.

From these quiet and sheltering conditions of his boyhood, whom Coleridge apostrophised, with absolute moral intuition if not in the language of great poetry, as "my gentle-hearted Charles," we must pass almost at a step to the day when an unexampled call was made upon whatever riches, whatever power of noble response, his nature had laid up in these quiet years of growth—a day when Life broke upon him suddenly in terror and tragedy, and when, in answer to that call, the gentle-hearted youth became a man in a single hour.

It was September, 1796. Seven years ago Charles had left Christ's Hospital, all hope of proceeding to one of the Universities, if he ever entertained such hopes, having been early abandoned, as it grew clear to Mary and to him that it was they who would have to support the roof-tree in the old age of their parents. In those seven years much had happened. Samuel Salt was dead, and the family had moved from the Temple to lodgings at No. 7 Little Queen Street, Holborn. John Lamb the younger lived elsewhere comfortably by himself and, in his own good-natured way, entirely for himself. Charles had been now five years a clerk in the East India House; and his salary, still but small, was the main support of the family. Some benefactions under the will of Samuel Salt, Aunt Hetty's small annuity, and what Mary could add by taking in needlework and having an apprentice to help her, made up the rest of their resource. Withal, they were very poor, though their condition would not have been one of actual distress had there not been a worse cause of distress than poverty in that house. But alas! the vivacity and high spirits of old John Lamb had died out in a quick collapse of his mental powers; the second childhood of senility

had overtaken him with sudden swiftness and rendered him, not quite unintelligent, indeed, but yet

> A palsy-smitten, childish, old, old man,
> A semblance most forlorn of what he was!

The case of his wife was scarce less melancholy. Upon her had come a physical helplessness equal to the mental debility of her husband, and she had need of night and day attendance. Almost the entire burden of minding or amusing these old people (for the poor old father even needed to be amused, to keep him from being morbid) fell upon Mary, during the long hours of Charles's absence, and she surrendered herself to the duty with absolute and ruinous devotion. But the deadly pressure of the confined life in that narrow home; the strain of ceaseless ministration and vigilance; the hopeless effort, perhaps, to meet with unflagging serenity and strength the call of querulous exaction sounding ever in her ears; the toiling, in the midst of it all, at miserable needlework in order to add a little to their means of living; the nights of wakeful sleep, or of none at all, passed by the side of the mother who needed her services night and day—it was an ordeal to have broken the strength of a man, or fretted, in time, the nerves of any woman into an insanity. And when Mary was a little girl, had not her grandmother Field often exclaimed upon "those poor moythered brains" of hers, and wondered whatever it could be that they were always thinking of? One thing that they were thinking of, even in those early days, Mary herself revealed, in heart-felt pathetic talk to strangers, after the calamity had befallen her. She had passed by the terrible walls of Bethlehem, and had felt a presage that some day she also would be closed in by them. It was a maniacal thought: a prospect, in those times especially, as much worse and more dreadful than

death, as death seems bitter in comparison with gladness and life. Well, the day was drawing on. It was the twenty-second of September, 1796.

Already there had been a warning given, could they have but realised its meaning, of what might happen from this martyrdom of a nature that was itself deeply and secretly afflicted: once already (we do not know when) Mary had shown symptoms that had required her to be put away for a time. And on the previous evening there had been that in her manner which gave her brother the thought to call upon Dr Pitcairn in the morning to take advice about her. But the doctor was out, so Charles went to the India House, meaning to see him later, on getting back from business. The day wore on; and wore out, at last, the poor shreds of nervous strength by which Mary's reasoning soul was held to its anchorage. Something happened—there was the final strain—the thin cord snapped—the afflicted spirit flew out of her—and Mary Lamb, the gentlest nature, and one of the wisest, that her generation knew, suddenly stood up reasonless, a maniac, and a tragic Fury. Seizing a case-knife, she pursued round the table her young apprentice. Her mother's outcries diverting her attention, she advanced upon her slowly with loud shrieks, and drove the knife into her heart. Then snatching the dinner-forks from the table, she began hurling them one by one madly about the room—and at this moment Charles burst in. He got the terrible knife from her grasp somehow, and succeeded in calming or overcoming her. But the full horror was accomplished: he saw his kind old aunt crouching almost palsied with terror; his helpless father bleeding profusely from a wound in the forehead; his mother a murdered corpse in her chair. And it was all the work of Mary; the most devoted of daughters, and to him his "dear

dearest sister" whom he held in unspeakable affection, and looked up to then, and all through life, in a kind of wonder and worship of the underived goodness and sweetness of her nature.

It was a scene to have unthroned the reason of the looker-on, both as loving son and loving brother; the more so as he was not without his own element of jeopardy, without his own share of an *instability*, a perilous fineness in the brain mechanism, a liability of the works to run down or go wild, which laid its penalties or its proofs not upon poor Mary alone, but upon him also, and upon his brother John ("I fear for his mind," says Charles repeatedly), and upon his father, and, we cannot doubt, that father's father before him. For this, almost surely, was the fact behind that sudden break-up of a home in Stamford early in the century, and the removal of the mother to Lincoln, and the hurried committal of a seven-year-old child to good friends in London who were willing to take care of him. And for Charles himself—in May of this very year he had written thus to Coleridge, in the earliest of his letters that has been preserved to us: "My life has been somewhat diversified of late. The six weeks that finished last year and begun this, your very humble servant spent very agreeably in a madhouse at Hoxton. I am got somewhat rational now, and don't bite any one. But mad I was! And many a vagary my imagination played with me; enough to make a volume, if all were told. . . . Coleridge! it may convince you of my regards for you when I tell you my head ran on you in my madness, as much almost as on another person, who I am inclined to think was the more immediate cause of my temporary frenzy." The other person was without doubt the fair-haired maid —— the "Anna" of the Poems, the "Alice W——n" of the Essays—whom he met and fell in love with

in boyhood almost, and for seven years served with that utter surrender and worship, of which only a nature so gentle and imaginative and biassed towards affection could be capable. From the early Poems and from "Rosamund Gray" we gather a sense of what kind of youth he was who "courted the fair Alice W——n." Much too good, of course, much too absolutely kind and sensitive and unselfish and unsinister, to court prosperously, or to any issue but his own hurt. Yet it had not always seemed so hopeless; perhaps not until someone came along whom the maid, or the maid's wise parents, thought there was more reason and likelihood in caring for. Probably it was at this point in the history, and on the occurrence of her marriage—which, it would almost seem, he was invited to attend—that his reason left him. Fortunately, this six weeks' vacation in a madhouse did not cost him his clerkship and entire prospect in life—as it would probably have done in our more strenuous and "efficient" era—and was neither spent without the attending kindness of his sister Mary, nor without intervals of lucidity, in one of which he wrote the touching sonnet already quoted from:

> If from my lips some angry accents fell,
> Peevish complaint, or harsh reproof unkind,
> 'Twas but the error of a sickly mind
> And troubled thoughts, clouding the purer well,
> And waters clear of Reason; and for me
> Let this my verse the poor atonement be—
> My verse, which thou to praise wert ever inclined
> Too highly, and with a partial eye to see
> No blemish. Thou to me didst ever show
> Kindest affection; and would ofttimes lend
> An ear to the desponding love-sick lay,
> Weeping my sorrows with me, who repay
> But ill the mighty debt of love I owe,
> Mary, to thee, my sister and my friend.

It was, then, to a heart thus lacerated, and but

slowly healing—to a brain still vibrating from a disturbance which had gone so near to subverting it forever—that the spectacle I have described presented itself. By all examples and arguments known to man, Charles Lamb should then have gone mad for good. But the appeal to his compassion, the cry for his help, saved him: and strength came to him from the ends of the world. He could not go mad, with madness there needing his protection; nor sink down, with frailty waiting for his support. He was aware of a call, which gave him "something else to do than to feel"; and took up his task with a sublime integration of every faculty in the service of the resolution which his soul espoused in that moment, and never after knew divorce or doubt: the resolution to live for his sister Mary, to stand between her and the world which would misjudge and oppress her, to stand between her and any future madness, if that might be.

And so the story of his after years is, in the main, little more than the story of his loyalty to this election and his endurance of a yearly-repeated test and ordeal. He was drawn by and by into literature, as we shall see, and he unfolded genius, and he won fame, and gathered friends. But the essential history of Charles Lamb was a domestic drama without events, or with one event only too often recurrent, and with, for its sole characters, a brother and a sister: a brother who by the power of his unselfishness kept sane—in spite of the mighty pull of heredity, tugging at his intelligence all his life—because he had a dearly-loved sister upon whom the Curse had already fallen, and who had need to be comforted in her affliction.

To go back to the moment. Its psychology, the wealth of moral beauty and intellectual strength which it was the occasion of revealing, must be sought in Charles Lamb's Letters; but here is the

bare line of the facts. Mary was placed at once in a private madhouse, with kind people; and Charles concentrated all his will, and every resource, to secure that she should remain there and *not* be consigned to "a hospital": to the Bethlehem of her early dread, the terrible prison-house of the insane poor. He had to make a resolute stand for this, against the advice of friends, chiefly his brother John; who wished him to be sensible, wished him to consider himself a little, and to acquiesce in the arrangements which would be best for him, and for his father, and for Mary herself —*of course*. But Charles did not want to be sensible; and was quite willing "to burn by slow fires" rather than that Mary should become a state prisoner in a madhouse for life—for that is what these advices meant. Her intelligence had returned, indeed, a few days after the tragedy; but as no medical guarantee of her immunity from a recurrence of the malady could be given, the fight to secure her return to the world lasted some months. She was released early in 1797, on Charles entering into a solemn engagement that he would take her under his care for life. The bringing her home in her father's lifetime was deemed inadvisable, however; so a room was taken for her at Hackney, where Charles spent as much time with her as he could get away from business and from attendance on his father, whose state was now worse than ever. They had in the interval moved from Little Queen Street, Holborn, to 45 Chapel Street, Pentonville—a situation of suburban obscurity. The new house, also, was a house of woe. Almost immediately after the tragedy, Aunt Hetty had been, kindly, and most unexpectedly, taken to live with "a gentlewoman of fortune, a relation of my father's and my aunt's." But the gentlewoman of fortune changed her disposition after a very few weeks' exercise of benevolence, and sent the poor old soul back to them

again; with a bitter commentary on her qualities and a sarcastic reference to "her attachment to us, which is so strong that"—thus did the gentlewoman sneer—"she can never be happy apart." Nor was Aunt Hetty sorry to be sent back, the more so as it was to die; for she wanted nothing so much as to die with her favourite nephew near her. She had, indeed, simply wasted away, in body and spirit, from the day of the shock: she who was a hearty old lady in September 1796, was buried almost a skeleton in the following February. For more than two years longer the sorrowful life-in-death of the poor old father—

Of all life's joys bereft and desolate—

protracted itself. But that desolation ceased at last when, in April 1799, he was laid to rest beside his wife and his sister, in the now vanished church-yard of St Andrews, Holborn. And at last Mary could be brought home.

But the hopes that had once formed part of Charles's expectations, when he looked towards that home-coming, were already clouded over. Mary's reason had again lapsed, within less than a year of her release. This was a blow under which he staggered, but only for a moment. "Mary is recovering," he wrote to Coleridge in January 1798; "but I see no opening yet of a situation for her. Your invitation went to my very heart; but you have a power of exciting interest, of leading all hearts captive, too forcible to admit of Mary's being with you. I consider her as perpetually on the brink of madness. I think you would almost make her dance within an inch of the precipice: she must be with duller fancies, and cooler intellects. I know a young man of this description who has suited her these twenty years, and may live to do so still, if we are one day restored to each other." And they were

restored; to have again and again the same periods of separation, for the same cause. But now they knew the terrible yearly tribute that one of them must pay, the sorrow they must bear in common, the huge cantles that were cut out of their lives together. They laid their account with the inevitable; Mary in meekness and a great-minded abstinence from the thoughts and the sorrowings that do not help; and Charles, like a man who had been born into the world to attend to this one matter, every other interest in life—business, and friendship, and literature alike—being but occupations by the way. And the tragic words above quoted—"I consider her as perpetually on the brink of madness"—were hardly an over-statement of the fact. Seldom a year passed, during the six-and-thirty that they were yet to live together, in which poor Mary was not "from home" during some part of the time. And during her times of mental self-possession a continual watch had to be kept against the things which tended to hasten the recurrence of her attacks. They seldom could allow themselves to take a holiday journey, whether to the seaside or the country, but *that* was the price to be paid for the necessary relaxation; and they never set out, but Mary with her own hands placed a strait-waistcoat among the things to be taken with them. During the earlier years, there was usually a slower approach, the calamity sending its shadow before it, so that they made their preparations quietly; and one day a friend met the brother and sister walking across the fields together, towards the old madhouse out Hoxton way, hand in hand, and both weeping. In later years, as the attacks grew more frequent and of longer duration, so the onset grew more abrupt and treacherous. Sometimes, by watchfulness and prompt action, it could be met and turned back, for a time.

Monotony was hurtful, if fatigue was dangerous; and over-stimulation was the most insidious of all; a too-great animation into which she might have been caught, whether as speaker or as listener, would in these later days mean a disturbance of the nerves, not to be quieted again by any sleep save the prolonged mind-slumber of insanity. Sometimes when he saw Mary becoming too eager, too animated, he would give his guests a sign to retire, and then with quiet chat or a sympathetic silence would perhaps get her back to the levels of safety. At another time he would notice suddenly, while the talk of friends filled the room—for they had many and talented friends in these days, and held what would have been a salon if it had not been something better and more generous—he would notice suddenly that Mary had been very quiet for some time, was looking fixed and not quite conscious of the scene—and at such times he has been known to lift the boiling kettle from the hob and, as if in extravagant monkey facetiousness, hold it close over her head-dress. Yet it was done from a heart breaking with anxiety and love, and was a way of snatching her out of a trance through which, he knew, she would drift quietly, if left alone, into insanity again. So he was always warding her, and always watching; and yet disguising this continuous preoccupation, from her, from his friends, and even from himself, with the whole range and variety of his tact, his talent, his humour, his geniality and his playfulness. A friend once asked him how he knew one from another, in his ragged regiment of old books: and he answered splendidly—"How does a shepherd know his sheep?" But never any shepherd in the world knew his sheep so well as Charles Lamb knew every look and tone and gesture of the dear afflicted sister whom he had engaged himself to take care of for life.

And, that this account may not be rendered false by incompleteness, let it be pointed out at once that this sister was in all ways worthy of his care of her, and was precious to him for other reasons than those which made her an object of compassionate solicitude. It is best told in the words of Talfourd. "Miss Lamb would have been remarkable for the sweetness of her disposition, the clearness of her understanding, and the gentle wisdom of all her acts and words, even if these qualities had not been presented in marvellous contrast with the distractions under which she suffered for weeks, latterly for months in every year. There was no tinge of insanity discernible in her manner to the most observant eye; not even in those distressful periods when the premonitory symptoms had apprised her of its approach, and she was making preparations for seclusion. Her character, in all its essential sweetness, was like her brother's; while by a temper more placid, a spirit of enjoyment more serene, she was enabled to guide, to counsel, to cheer him and to protect him on the verge of the mysterious calamity from the depths of which she rose so often unruffled to his side. To a friend in any difficulty she was the most comfortable of advisers, the wisest of consolers. Hazlitt used to say that he never met with a woman who could reason, and had met with only one woman thoroughly reasonable—the sole exception being Mary Lamb." And similar testimonies have been left by all who ever knew her: De Quincey calling her "that Madonna-like lady," and Allsop recording that a few words which she said to him when he first made their acquaintance, a young man who was yet at the cross-ways of the world, and had his course to decide—how the words which Mary Lamb spoke to him, and the way in which she looked at him, had influenced him more permanently

than anything else in all his life. But the one whom she influenced most of all was her brother; not alone, negatively by the strange discipline which her malady imposed upon his life, and which was the key to many things in his character and behaviour; but also positively and nutritively by the strength that he drew from life-long daily contact with qualities, both mental and moral, which commanded his reverence as strongly as they held his love, and were to him always a touchstone of rectitude and an inspiration toward every worthy effort. In fine, although it is customary for us who write of him to speak of his life as consisting of a long act of self-sacrifice, he himself never had any glimmering of that view of their relation to one another. He only knew that he had ceaseless daily obligations to her, and that the account extended "beyond the period of memory." A few sentences from a letter to Miss Wordsworth, written in June 1805, may serve as the last word (and he would have wished them to be the only one) in this summary of that side of the story of his life. "Your long kind letter has not been thrown away . . . but poor Mary, to whom it is addressed, cannot yet relish it. She has been attacked by one of her severe illnesses, and is at present *from home*. Last Monday week was the day she left me, and I hope I may calculate upon having her again in a month or so. . . I have every reason to suppose this illness, like the former ones, will be but temporary; but I cannot always feel so. Meantime she is dead to me, and I miss a prop. All my strength is gone, and I am like a fool, bereft of her co-operation. I dare not think, lest I should think wrong; so used am I to look up to her in the least and the biggest perplexity. To say all I know of her would be more than I think anybody could believe or even understand. . . It would be sinning

against her feelings to go about to praise her. . . She is older and wiser and better than I, and all my wretched imperfections I cover to myself by resolutely thinking of her goodness. . . But even in upbraiding myself I am offending against her, for I know she has cleaved to me for better, for worse; and if the balance has been against her hitherto, it was a noble trade." Certainly it was a noble trade.

In following the topic of Mary Lamb's affliction, to the exclusion, for the moment, of everything else, we have already travelled a good distance down the years, ignoring a whole landscape of incidents and works that has accompanied us on one side of the way: the story, to wit, of Charles Lamb's life as a Man of Letters. It is time to revert to the point at which this may be considered as having its beginnings, the period immediately following his removal from Christ's Hospital. Here we find him still in the inspiring companionship of Coleridge. Their contrasted vocations, by all appearances, should have broken the continuity of their schoolboy friendship. Lamb had gone to be a clerk in the City and had no smallest link now with the intellectual life of his time; whereas Coleridge had proceeded to Cambridge, and had gathered a great deal of mark, if not of approval, both before and after leaving that seat of learning. He was now fairly out in the wide world; a preacher, a revolutionary, a rhapsodist, a problematical young man with devout followers older than himself, an expansive improver of mankind at whom sensible people shook their sensible heads. But the friendship between him and Lamb was even firmer, being to each of them more a conscious and valued possession, than in the earlier days. So, whenever Coleridge came up to London, which he did frequently while at Cambridge, the two friends met in

the Lamb household and elsewhere. Classic above all places of their meeting—the scene of *their* "nights and suppers of the Immortals"—was, especially in the end of the year 1794, "the nice smoky little room at the *Salutation and Cat*, which is ever now," writes Lamb at a later time, "continually presenting itself to my recollection, with all its associated train of pipes, tobacco, egg-hot, welsh-rabbits, metaphysics, and poetry." Here, it is apparent, they expatiated in the same kind of talk (though doubtless better of its kind) and in the same great forgetfulness of the vulgar hour, with which companionable young poets have entertained themselves in all recent if not also in remoter ages. Of what might result from these reunions a small token had already appeared in the Spring of 1796: "Poems on Various Subjects. By S. T. Coleridge, late of Jesus College, Cambridge." This largely entitled work contained four sonnets by Lamb, to which the Greater Ajax referred the Public in a manner still more large. "The Effusions signed C. L. were written by Mr Charles Lamb, of the India House—independently of the signature, their superior merit would have sufficiently distinguished them." Their superior merit was not a topic of the time, and very few people read the book, but the fact of their publication was decisive for their author. When a man has once appeared in print, he has no choice but to repeat the offence or the achievement. For however it goes, he must venture again; either to retrieve the disgrace into which he has fallen, or to vindicate his right to the honour which he has won. So in the following months of that year the cultivation of literature was going on apace. There was reading of poets and there was writing of verses, and there was a frequent correspondence with Coleridge (now domiciled at Bristol, and married) in which the criti-

cism of poems—everybody's poems, but especially your poems and my poems, which we send one another, with the breath of creation still hot upon them, at short intervals—forms the staple of the intellectual converse. In a word, a more extensive and important volume was now in preparation, to which Mr Charles Lamb of the India House was to contribute more considerably than he did to its predecessor. But the blow which fell upon his household in September of that year crushed out suddenly every interest less tragic and urgent; and in the very letter in which he sent Coleridge word of the calamity, he said: "Write as religious a letter as possible, but no mention of what is gone and done with. With me 'the former things are passed away.' . . . Mention nothing of poetry. I have destroyed every vestige of past vanities of that kind. Do as you please, but if you publish, publish mine (I give free leave) without name or initial, and never send me a book, I charge you." What the Former Things were, and how closely related to the Poetry, we gather from another passage written nearly three months later. "You sent me some very sweet lines relative to Burns, but it was at a time when . . . I thought it a duty to read 'em hastily and burn 'em. I burned all my own verses, all my book of extracts from Beaumont and Fletcher and a thousand sources: I burned a little journal of my foolish passion which I had a long time kept." A passionate and eloquent act of sacrifice! by which he decreed the blotting out of all trivial fond records and the divorce of every interest that could divide his attention or draw away any of the strength of purpose with which he had devoted himself to his father and his sister.

But fortunately the same spirit which had prompted the renunciation was the means of inducing him to take up again the interests which he had thus cast

from him. The book was to appear, however he might feel towards it, and he was drawn by Coleridge into the discussion of emendations and final readings; which had its own sedative and healing effect. Especially he was influenced by the wish to dedicate his part in the joint volume to his poor sister, because he felt that the world was much against her, and she was still in the madhouse, although now quite sane and as wise and gentle as ever. "I wish to accumulate perpetuating tokens of my affection to poor Mary," he exclaims in one letter. And so the new book, or new edition, as it was called, appeared in 1797: "Poems, by S. T. Coleridge. Second edition. To which are now added Poems by Charles Lamb and by Charles Lloyd." Again Coleridge explicitly bespoke for the work of his friend the special admiration of all purchasers of the volume. "There were inserted in my former Edition a few Sonnets by my Friend and Old Schoolfellow, Charles Lamb. He has now communicated to me a complete collection of his Poems—*quæ qui non prorsus amet, illum omnes et virtutes et veneres odere.*" The complete collection was a very small sheaf when all was said; but it had its own unmistakable character of sincerity and gentleness. Apart from two or three love-sonnets, it showed noticeably the influence of two preoccupations with which all his work during the next few years, both in prose and verse, was most fully saturated. The first of these was a preoccupation with religious thoughts; a sombre yet submissive dwelling upon the ideas of human Blindness and Sin and Weakness, living but a little while in the hazard of Judgment; contrasted, trustfully indeed, but not joyously, with the thought of Divine Foreknowledge, and Power, and the Rights of Vengeance: a vein of meditation which, one feels, might well have proved disastrous at that crisis in his life. But it was counteracted, even then,

by that second preoccupation: namely, a glad and grateful sense—which urges into expression in poems, tales and letters—of the preciousness, the unspeakable beauty and worth, of the kindly *home-affections*, those merely cherishing and wholly unselfish loves of brother and sister, parent and child, nephews and aunts, grandparents and grandchildren: those quiet, perennial, saving, human sanctities, which Literature overlooks and slights almost utterly, in its exclusive devotion to that *other* love—of man and woman, youth and maid—though the latter is so often fraught with every selfishness and ignobility, and has caused much waste and wrong and wretchedness in the world, whatever happiness may have gone with it in the experience of the fortunate. This conviction, of the greater humanity and benevolence of these first affections of the heart, and of their prior claim to our regard, their closer identity with the moral nature, never ceased to be valid for him. It determined the course of his own life, and did much to mould his character. It has left, besides what may be read in the Poems, an aroma of peculiar sweetness, heartfeltness, kindness, upon many an Elian page. Not only those in which he talks with such humour, so sly, because so loving and sure of itself, of "cousin Bridget" (his sister Mary), but also in, say, his sympathetic description of "Captain Jackson" and his daughters, or in that passage where he tells how a lonely lad at Christ's Hospital endured the calumny and derision of his world—endured, indeed, an effective intellectual and moral outlawry—rather than fail to carry away to his famished parents the scraps of meat and fat at which schoolboy gorges had risen: without which timely succour these poor old folk would have died of hunger in their obscure garret in the Chancery Lane of that day. But the religious, or the *theological* note in Lamb's mind, or his writings,

was not thus permanent, and perhaps it was not so well worth sustaining. It disappeared in no long time; perhaps we should say it died away inwards, and was absorbed; at any rate he ceased to be explicit about these things. He seems to have felt by and by that even the bare Unitarianism in which he had been trained from childhood—and devoutly Unitarian he was in his twenty-first year, almost to being a sectary and a zealot—contained too heavy a burden of opinions that awaited verification. These "definite truths" of Religion, if truths they were, were a treasure not to boast about until you had made sure that you had them, and that they could not be taken away from you. And indeed both his intellect and his sense of humour could not but be impressed, when they were fully come of age, by the astounding confidence with which people permit themselves to assert things about God—not touching the great lines of that Inscrutable Conception alone, but entering into the very crevices of His Character and expounding the details of His thought and the minor motives of His conduct in history. "Poor Elia," Lamb once wrote, "does not pretend to so very clear revelations of a future state of being. He stumbles about dark mountains at best; but he knows at least how to be thankful for this life, and is too thankful indeed for certain relationships lent him here not to tremble for a possible resumption of the gift." His religion was indeed that religion—of undogmatic reverence—of the great men of letters in all the world, from Plutarch to Thackeray, and from Virgil to Rossetti. Coleridge spoke of him as "one hovering between heaven and earth, neither hoping much nor fearing anything." Perhaps we might say a little more than that; and opine that Lamb, like Rossetti, who (as it seems to me) was carried onward towards religion by the sense of beauty and by the pull upon him, in his latter days, of a

vanished love—or like John Stuart Mill, who was carried towards religion by a life-long occupation with disinterested thoughts about man's condition *here*, and how it might be made more worthy of his ideals and his dreams—I think we may say of these, that they looked towards the close of earthly life—towards death and the things that may be thereafter—in an attitude of devout submission and of willing expectancy; expectancy gladdened, however faintly, by a faith that was only not an affirmation, and a hope that gave no reason why. Nevertheless Thackeray—greatest of these men of letters, and whose one way of comfort and of wisdom it was, at the worst,

> To bow before the awful Will
> And bear it with an honest heart—

Thackeray died, as became a prophet and a solitary, alone in the night. And Charles Lamb desired the ministrations of no clergyman.

But the interest in Poetry re-established the wider interest in Literature again, and the habit of composing, and of hoping to achieve something fine, never after left him entirely. A number of important and valued friendships which were soon after formed—and almost every one of them brought, either directly or indirectly, by Coleridge—were so many new strands giving strength to the complex cord of associations which bound him henceforward to the world of Letters. The next six or ten years was essentially an experimental or apprentice period, though it was a period also in which the apprentice produced some masterpieces, not altogether in the line of his later genius. From 1795 to 1800 is distinctively his poetic period; poetic, with a certain stricken gentleness of heart in all he wrote; religious also, very sad, and verging towards sombre vaticinations. To this

time belong not only these poems expressive of the filial and family affections which were so much to him just then, but also "A Tale of Rosamund Gray and Old Blind Margaret," published in 1798, and his poetic tragedy "John Woodvil," which he was writing in that year, though it was not published till 1802. He had written it with a view to the stage and actually submitted it, not quite hopelessly, to Kemble: a thing which seems difficult to understand, unless we note once for all that there was in Charles Lamb from first to last—in spite of his incomparable critical faculty, for the divining of meanings and the apprehension of beauties in the masterpieces of literary drama, and in spite of his subtlety and his sure relish as critic of a given piece of acting—there was a something lacking in his comprehension of the nature of drama, as distinguished from romance or fiction or poetry, so that he was at fault and unfortunate in every step that he attempted towards the actual stage. I say the *nature* of drama, the inner character and central strength of it, the vital element in *the process of its making*: as to its effects, as to its results when made, no man ever felt them with more certainty and knowledge than he. But "John Woodvil," which as a drama is naught, must be read for its fresh and somewhat over-green spirit of poetry, curiously overcast by a cloud of thoughts and moralities that are only half realised. The same vernal freshness, and the same sense of clouds that lower, give its character to "Rosamund Gray," a fantasy wrought of a wild and terrible events happening to characters whom we cannot forget, but whom we do not know. "The villain who lays waste their humble joys," Talfourd has well said, "is a murky phantom without individuality: the events are obscured by a haze of sentiment which hovers over them; and the narrative gives

way to the reflections of the author, who is mingled with the persons of the tale in visionary confusion, and gives to it the character of a sweet but disturbed dream." Bearing frankly the evidences —in imitativeness and in quotation—of the young author's favourite reading, it yet more powerfully suggests comparison with models by whom he can hardly have been directly influenced, but whom he resembled in virtue of a substantial moral affinity and heart-likeness. People have pointed out that the book is "not quite sane." Perhaps that is another way of saying, what I should like to point out, that it is not quite English. So much so, that had Lamb been a reader of German (a language of which he never knew a word, apparently) and been steeped in the works of the Romantic writers, then "Rosamund Gray" would have been conveniently classed and accounted for long ago. It would have become a commonplace of criticism to say that in this "miniature romance" was distilled and concentrated the influence, the essential spirit, of that contemporary foreign literature, more vitally, and in a purer sublimation of all its characters of imagination and of mental immaturity—or call it unworldliness, idealism, mawkishness, the mark of Abel—than in any English literary work of that period. The early poems, also, suggest the same affinity with a mood that is not that of his countrymen even when they are poets. In the love-sonnets, for instance, there is a plaintiveness, there is a subjection of the whole heart, which one finds in many a German Volkslied, whether *Abschied* or *Klage*, and in the music not less than the words. "*Muss i' denn*" always makes me think of Charles Lamb in his twentieth year. Others of the things which he cared at that time to express are not things that his countrymen care for. We don't care much for our fathers and mothers, and we

usually hate our brothers and sisters; whereas all the world knows what "die Mutter" is in a German household; and I have seen a German of mature years speak of his brother with tears in his eyes, though he had no cause for grief but the fact that he had not seen him for so long. There is something in the language which nips these feelings in us, and renders us unkindly, save when we have a purpose of our own to serve. For the man has made little use of his time who has reached the age of thirty without repeatedly noticing that in the English language it is possible to make love, but not to express affection.

But concurrently with this first period—tragic in its incidents, poetic, sensitive, sore-hearted and tending to sombre religiosity, in its predominating moods—another period, what we may call Charles Lamb's second period, had already begun, and for a time ran parallel with it. This was the period of his gathering acquaintance with men; growing familiar with the world by actual contact with its affairs; and becoming, above all, better acquainted with himself, and with the possibilities that there were in his own peculiar group of characteristics and powers. As to the first: at the beginning of 1796 Coleridge seems to have been his only correspondent, and indeed the only man with whom he could hold converse about the subjects which he cared for most at that time. Even in June he already speaks of himself as one "cast on life's wide plain, friendless," and he clings to the connection with Coleridge as though the said plain were the ocean and that connection his one plank. After the calamity, and with his sister still *from home*, the loneliness was greater than ever. There, he had only the companionship of his aged and imbecile father; and as to his fellow clerks at the India House: "Not a soul loves Bowles here;

scarce one has heard of Burns; few but laugh at me for reading my Testament—they talk a language I understand not: I conceal sentiments that would be a puzzle to them." Later he speaks of himself as having almost lost the faculty of speech; of his thought having become stagnant and dead, for want of a direction in which to flow. In January of the following year: "I rejoice, and feel my privilege with gratitude, when I have been reading some wise book, such as I have just been reading—'Priestley on Philosophical Necessity'—in the thought that I enjoy a kind of communion, a kind of friendship even, with the great and good. Books are to me instead of friends. I wish they did not resemble the latter in their scarceness." It will be understood, then, how his heart melted in gratitude, and how his gratitude flowed into sincere and simple verse, when Coleridge sent his young poetic friend, Charles Lloyd—"An Unexpected Visitor"—to seek him out, almost on the day that these words were written. But other friendships followed, and yet others; all of them, directly or indirectly, sent to him or brought to him by Coleridge. And none of them missed, then or later. His friends became many, and amongst them were men of marked intellectual and moral character; men often mutually repellent, and of an engrossing and emphatic individuality. But though some of them might barely understand, and less than barely tolerate, one another, yet each of them understood Lamb, though not one of them would have thought of trying to account for him. Only, they were sure of him; they *knew* him, each man for himself and in his own way. For Lamb, *he* understood them all, because he comprehended them all. Perhaps he felt within himself the elements of each of them, crowding for its overt place in the range of his jeopardised faculties; perhaps he had lived the great represent-

ative moments of all human life, in aspiration and sorrow, and could be a little careless of the small things that make the common differences of men. That a man thought this way or that about the tangential and fleeting things of the mind—opinions, politics, creeds and the rest—must have seemed a small thing to him, into whose life there had come that which could not be thought of at all, save at the peril of madness. It must have seemed a small thing, the different ways in which men speak of a world of which everything can be said with safety—a very small thing to him, who had known That for which there was no word but silence and a closing of the eyes of memory and consciousness. Because he had suffered, and loved, and must still suffer, he stood at the centre, exercising the generosity of a proved endurance: he was the equivalent, and something more, of all those souls that came to him with only their human nature, their inessential differences, and their everyday destiny. But just because there was in his life and in the tragic substance of his nature so much that must forever be latent, almost to himself—so much that reluctd fearfully from the approaches of communication and must be remembered only as a thing forgotten—just for that reason there was a great liberation of the partial, the momentary and apprehensive powers, playing freely like ripples on the surface of a deep still sea—and just for that reason was he heart-glad and grateful for the points of contact that were given him with the lives and feelings and interests of other men. He multiplied these points of contact, and made much of them, realising himself just *there* while the contact lasted. His whole nature converged upon, or flowed towards, that which was common ground of thought and feeling in him and the friend or correspondent of the moment: even as they say there is a power, which

some possess more largely than others, of determining by an instant act of thought a greater pressure of the blood, and of the sense of life, towards some particular province or corner in the varied island-kingdom of the body. Already in the Preface I have said something of this, in insisting that every biographer and critic must limit his construction of Lamb's words by what we know of "the extraordinary mobility and adaptation, the infinite tactfulness and close-fitting personal understanding and sympathy, and the unfailing good-heartedness of intention that are ever at play" in his letters to his friends. What needs to be insisted upon here is not the fact, but the part which it played in the making of him. And the shortest way to the truth is to say in a word that it *was* the making of him: that he would never have become the Charles Lamb we know—so implicitly wise and so absolutely catholic, even when disguising himself, as he loved to do, in a carnival dress of levity and whimsies and a coat-armour of proclaimed prejudices—but for that manifold spiritual gymnastic, that exercise of the whole man in a round of diverse appreciations and generous acts of intellectual justice done to other and more partial natures—of which his letters were the momentary expression and are now the permanent memorial. In the correspondence (say from 1797 to 1807) with Coleridge, Southey, Lloyd, Wordsworth, Manning, Hazlitt, Godwin and others, he not only looked down many vistas of personality and was a sharer, by sympathy, in many perceptions and adjustments of the mind that were not primarily his own, but also in the course of it he first struck the rich veins of his own thought and humour, and became expert, almost unaware, in the use of faculties which, but for this, would never have been developed in such variety or been so integrated as they were in a single character; a character full of

diversity, indeed, yet always centrally true to itself. Here he not only gathered confidence in relation to the world, but by many casual venturings of thought, and advices given, and gaieties, and extravagances even, *found* himself as man-of-letters, nearly a generation before his greater literary career began. To repeat and to sum up: without the manifold preliminary exploitation of his thoughts, moods, and faculties, which the correspondence of his third decade made possible—supplying both stimulation and the sense of security, since it was all play—thrice the giftedness and sensibility of the young author of "Rosamund Gray" and thirty times Charles Lamb's familiarity with the Elizabethans, and with Sir Thomas Browne, and Burton, and George Wither to boot, would never certainly have yielded that rich incomparable, amphibian result, which is half a Single Personality and half a Unique Literature—Elia and the Essays of Elia. And if a great part of the riches of this Personality, for us, and of this Literature, is what is called his *Humour*, does it not follow from what is already said that the Humour could not but be there, and abundantly? For the Humourist is one who, having suffered, has assimilated sorrow and transformed it, if not into gaiety, into an enduring kindness of the heart; or who through bitterness and tragedy has "come to himself," in all senses, and now stands before you, trying to forget it.

Between the writing of "John Woodvil" in 1799 and the inauguration of Elia in 1820, Lamb —apart from the monument he was unconsciously building up in his correspondence—was mainly seeking his proper path in literature, or awaiting his fitting opportunity; and all his works of this period are essentially things done by the way. That they show, ever and again, the master-marks of beauty and power, needs not to be said—amongst Poems,

were there not the lines on Hester Savory, and amongst Prose pieces was there not the great Essay on Shakespeare's Tragedies?—but upon the whole they are casual attempts, experiments, things not followed up with confidence or enthusiasm. They seem in part an overture, and in part a tuning of the instruments; an elimination of the shrills and the flats of thought and humour; a proving in detail of those panorchestral capabilities from which harmonies more complex and more mellow were yet to flow. And during part of this time he was content to perform on a very thin penny-whistle indeed: to discharge the duties of staff-jester or comic paragraphist to certain morning newspapers. Into this world also he was brought by Coleridge, with an introduction to "wisest Stuart"; but he went further in it without guidance, and made some acquaintances that were less in Coleridge's way. The "Morning Chronicle" in 1800 was an important and respectable organ, and the "Morning Post" in 1802 seems to have been even more so, in spite of some pretensions to humour. But the "Albion" in 1801 had neither respectability nor importance, to limit the genius of its one contributor of talent, who was also one of its two-and-twenty readers. It was malcontent (see *Newspapers Five and Thirty Years Ago*) and "again the Government"; and Lamb entered into its libellous humour with such loyalty and devotion that he contributed, finally, an epigram upon an eminent statesman, after the publication of which, that paper ceased to appear. Yet the "Albion" was really the most valuable of all his newspaper connections, for it infused into him just that modicum of criminal hardiness and that sense of desperate doings and hazardous complicities which was needed to bring him safely out of the sensitive-plant condition of his first shrinking morality. Apart from

the profligate nature of his own writings to the "Albion" (savage recommendations to His Majesty's Ministers to go forth at once and perform the Happy Dispatch !) the connection was educative and valuable because it brought him into close and friendly relations with such men as John Fenwick ("Ralph Bigod") and his henchman Fell and others of their kind. Their fortunes were like their characters, uncertain or chaotic. A very matured blend, rather, of irreconcilables: of the intelligent and practised journalist, knowing men and things, and yet of the fantastic child of hope; ragged as to reputation, and yet "seeming to have something noble about them;" disreputable reformers of mankind, sanguine, disastrous, and melancholic; canvassing the affairs of state, but apt to borrow the cash in hand which even persons "seeming to have something noble about them" are sometimes requested to produce by very small people. Lamb made their close and hearty acquaintance in all these characters, especially in the character of "great sitters up a-nights, disputants," *not always sober*. At the very worst, they were good worthless fellows, down fighting in the kennels of life, yet with a look skyward, a streak of the ideal. They had much to talk of that was all interesting to him, and knowledge, and redolent of poor human nature. And listening to them of an evening he would interpose a kind of ease: would effect sociably, and with the sanction of friendly feeling and hospitable offices, just that lifting of the sense of care—just that escape from the pressure of solicitude and the monotony of responsibilities—without which it is questionable whether Charles Lamb would have lived to anything like the age he reached, and still more questionable whether, without these respites and these re-creations of his strained and perilous nervous system, his brain would

have worn so bravely as it did, or done humanity such a good day's service. And sometimes he sat too late, and sometimes he drank too much; that is to say, more than was necessary in order to get the benefit of drinking. But indeed the benefit came to him very readily; for a very little would make all the difference. And the difference was all to the good, in spirits enhanced, shyness shaken off, and a tongue freed from its stammer, or not stayed by it. Nevertheless, because Lamb has been very frank about his drinkings, and was once or twice remorseful on that score, people have made much of this harmless natural-history fact in his constitution and his life, and have spoken as if there was something here to curse, or to excuse lamely. Those people are fools, so no more need be said. But this friendship and good-fellowship with men of unsettled or fugitive life and dubious reputation is worth noting for another reason. It marks the point in Lamb's character which, more than any other, may be considered the central and determining point: his absolute humanity. Though he counted among his friends men of acknowledged eminence and genius, and was a sharer in the intellectual and moral interests which their names stood for, and was indeed entitled to the liberties of that craft and brotherhood; yet his sense of brotherhood, then and all through life, was not less towards another group of friends, of the Fenwick and Fell description; and below these again another group of simple common folk, as undistinguished as they were honest and poor. It will be remembered that, as a reader, he had no repugnances: "Jonathan Wild was not too low." As all books with the secret of life in them were Literature for him, so all men who came within the sphere of his immediate knowledge were worthy in his eyes, and endeared to his heart,

each in his degree, without other recommendations to his regard beyond their idiosyncrasies, their honest imperfection, their touch of the motley, their troubles —their inestimable human nature. To that moral niceness—or finicking stupidity aping pride—which is every hour of every day branding and banishing this, that and the other human creature to a place beyond the pale of the select, he was as superior as he was to that anæmic æsthetic piety which thinks it stands nearer to the divinity of Raphael because it has passed by the humanity of Hogarth with closed eyes and barricaded nostrils. "The *intimados* of Elia," he tells us, "were, to confess a truth, in the world's eye a ragged regiment. He found them floating on the surface of society; and the colour, or something else in the weed, pleased him. The burs stuck to him; but they were good and loving burs for all that." Perhaps no man, certainly no English writer, since Shakespeare, had a toleration at once so wise and so wide, a relish so universal for human imperfection. His sympathy was transformed into knowledge in the act, and his knowledge into an ample immediate forgiveness. But indeed he saw very little to forgive in the world, though much to be sorry for, and some things it was better to forget. But at least in the individual human being he saw what was always in some unique way good; and the greater concreteness of imperfect or unideal natures seemed to give a surer place of standing to his affections. Existence was full of dilemmas, and the world too vast to think of, and he had come into it, he knew not whence, as into a scene of terrors, to pass on, he knew not whither. But of the personal relations granted here and now, and the always aboriginal reality of individual natures when wisely looked into—these were points of certainty towards which he drew: not so much, as we now see, downwards and away from

the ideal, as inwards and toward the centre of the secret.

Nevertheless, as every new truth is at first overstated, so every improvement is, in the beginning, a little over-done. To this gathering of acquaintance with the world and men, and this cult of comradeship and evening hospitality, he sacrificed in the opening years of the century more time and more nervous tissue than the state of his resources in either respect seemed to justify. He found that they were not saving money; and that the little that they had had "beforehand"—or, as we should say, against a rainy day—was dwindled. That they should have had anything at all "beforehand" at this time, is a fact worthy of deep meditation. However, he must bestir him to make a little extra money somehow; and he wrote a Farce. He wrote it, and thought much of it, and sent it to Drury Lane: and after the usual lapse of time and torture he heard from the Management: and his farce ("Mr H.") was accepted, and put in the bills, and rehearsed, and produced on December 10, 1806, and—hissed at the close with simultaneous and enormous unanimity by the whole house! It was a prolonged and tremendous effort, and came—an inverse ovation, an acclamation of shames—so obviously from the general heart, that the sympathetic author finally joined in, to complete the harmony, and hissed with the best of them. But "damn them—*how* they hissed!" he exclaims a year later. Well, that hope was gone. But before this "fall from the top of Drury Lane" occurred, Mary and he were already far advanced in an undertaking that has had more prosperous fortunes. This was the "Tales from Shakspeare," a commission undertaken by Mary alone; but in the end Charles agreed to collaborate, and contributed the renderings of the greater Tragedies. The book was published in 1807,

and was an instant success. The sixty pounds or so paid for it was not their best reward, for in every year since then the book has brought the brother and sister together into the hearts and heads of new generations of the old and young. Before the close of that year another joint book was published—again in William Godwin's *Juvenile Library*—namely "Mrs Leicester's School," a collection of tales for young people, of which Mary wrote seven and Charles three. Original inventions, this time, you perceive. And yet not *all* invention; for here they inaugurated that habit of drawing upon their own recollections and describing accurately the scenery and the personalities of their childhood which was to make certain Magazine contributions of a future day so bewilderingly "rich in biographic"—as well as other—"lore." The following year (1808) saw the production of "The Adventures of Ulysses," a most charming summary of that greatest of Traveller's Tales—a great wine of literature sparkingly decanted out of the Poetry of old Chapman into the Prose of Charles Lamb. "Chapman is divine," he said, with full assurance and sufficient impartiality twenty years later, "and my abridgment has not quite emptied him of his divinity." The same year, 1808, brought forth a yet greater birth than any of these, certainly one that was to have a greater effect upon the subsequent literature and literary scholarship of England: "Specimens of English Dramatic Poets who lived about the Time of Shakespeare." This work—"done out of the old Plays at the Museum and out of Dodsley's Collection . . . It is to have Notes," he said—did two epochal things: it called out of oblivion a great Forgotten Literature, and it revealed the existence in England of an imaginative genius of a very rare order—it announced also, be it added, the appearance in the world of a new kind of criticism with tremen-

dous potentialities. To continue, however. From the sombre terrors of Webster and the more dubious moral darkness of Ford's disastrous plots it seems a far cry, if not a deep falling away, to Poems intended to inculcate the kind of lessons that childhood needs, in the kind of language that childhood understands. Yet that was the motive, and it determined the literary manner, of "Poetry for Children," published by Godwin in 1809, and in which again the brother and sister collaborated. This little work was well received in a rather unfortunate way. For almost the whole of its contents having been absorbed into a Child's Anthology published by the same house a few years later, the original work was not reprinted, and so came near to being lost to the world altogether. "We have almost worked ourselves out of child's work, and I don't know what to do," he said in this year. He thought wistfully of drama . . . "but I have no head for play-making; I can do the dialogue, and that's all." He had not *quite* worked himself out of child's work, however: within the next two or three years two or three lesser books, for littler children still (their names are eloquent of the audience—"Prince Dorus," "Beauty and the Beast," "The King and Queen of Hearts," and perhaps others that have been lost, as *these* were for a couple of generations) prolonged, and also ended, the tale of the gentle services of Charles and Mary Lamb—"old bachelor and old maid," as he said, perhaps a little sadly—in the cause of childhood. And with them we have almost closed the history of this Second Period of his literary life. For though the next work from his hand was widely different in kind, it followed so closely in time—and was succeeded by so long an interval, almost quite void of literary production—that it may be considered as simultaneous with the works just enumerated. I speak now of his contributions, in the year 1811, to

"The Reflector"; a quarterly organ of literature edited by the amiable and vicissitudinous Leigh Hunt, who, if not a genius, was the equal *confrère* of all the geniuses, and withal a good man who made play for a deal of talent that was not often better than his own. To the talent, or the genius, of Lamb, he gave too much play on this occasion. For fourteen considerable contributions from one hand in the course of three Numbers—and these, too, contributions in which the originality of the humour and the power and passion of the intellect were, beyond all possible manner of doubt, the sole and too sufficient reason for their being there—fourteen such contributions in three Numbers was a heavy message to ask any poor magazine to convey to a world which, as every experienced philosopher and practical journalist knows, can only receive communications of new truth and original thought in homœopathic quantities. When I say that one Number contained the Essay *On the Genius of Hogarth* and the paper *On Burial Societies*, and that the next Number (No. IV.) contained *On the Tragedies of Shakspeare*, *A Farewell to Tobacco*, and some five good things besides, all from the same hand —it will be understood that the magazine died at once. However, the things had appeared, and that was the great matter. For thereby Lamb had got rid of them; and his generation had, by that projection, so far got hold of him. It began to apprehend, in its more observant, more critical discernments, that here was a spirit of rare personality and integral intellect exploiting itself casually, in vagaries of pseudonymous humour, and unpremeditated starts of intellectual splendour, luminous and steady as the empyrean. He had his recognition from the usual audience, few but fit; and it was all the fewer because he stood out of the company. When a publisher with a taste for letters (a parlous rarity—but perhaps Providence created the anomaly

to meet the occasion) expressed a desire to have Mr Lamb's scattered writings collected, he had the consent and the wonder, rather than the admiration, of the author. "The Works of Charles Lamb: in Two Volumes" was published in 1818; and bears, I think, some evidences of the author's indifference to the whole venture. It contained no prose-piece of later date than the "Reflector" pages, except the staid and serious *Recollections of Christ's Hospital*, which had appeared in the "Gentleman's Magazine" in 1813. It was in that very year that the *Confessions of a Drunkard* appeared in "The Philanthropist"—a fact which I recommend those to ponder long and deeply who find in the latter Essay anything but a consummate and flagrant exercise of talent and humour.

These things were done, be it borne in mind, in the extra-official hours of a hard-worked clerk, who sacrificed of his spare time a great deal to friendship in the two forms of hospitality and correspondence; whose constitution was, if not exactly feeble, yet wreckish and uncertain, and who seems indeed to have suffered during nearly his whole life (as an American biographer, Mr Benjamin Ellis Martin, has been the first to suggest) from the condition known now-a-days as nervous dyspepsia. They were done, also, under the always pressing consciousness of Mary's affliction, and in spite of the great blanks that were made in his own life by the recurrences of her periods of mental eclipse; amid the harassments, finally, of repeated changes of domicile, which never failed to induce one of these attacks. For this gentle brother and sister were, for a number of years, in a sense hunted people. They were an object of curiosity and remark, not to say of prejudice and of superstitious repulsion and fear, for a space around; and it was to avoid the torture which this brought upon them that their earlier migrations were made. From Holborn to Penton-

ville in 1797 was a remove almost from city to country. But their story somehow went with them or followed after; and a year or two of country neighbourliness made them very fain of the security and incuriosity of London streets. How grateful were they, therefore, when an old friend of theirs, a Mr Gutch, offered to let them rent part of his house (or, as it would rather seem, the upper part of some business premises) in Southampton Buildings, Holborn! "Here I soon found myself at home; and here, in six weeks after, Mary was well enough to join me." Thus to Coleridge in the Autumn of 1800. "So we are once more settled. I am afraid we are not placed out of the reach of future interruptions. But I am determined to take what snatches of pleasure we can between the acts of our distressful drama." This is the best prospect he sees then, a young man of five-and-twenty, looking into the long future. Interruption of a sinister kind came soon: a few months later he writes—"I am going to change my lodgings, having received a hint that it would be agreeable, at Our Lady's next feast." It is not likely that Mr Gutch had changed his disposition towards his friends; but rather that his partner —for he had a partner, who had to be consulted about the letting—was a very ordinary man, and therefore became troublesome. But it was for the best: for this gadfly was the means of driving them home again—back to the Temple! On March 25, 1801, they moved into their new rooms, under the roof, at 16 Mitre Court Buildings; whence looking, his visitors, if they bring their own spy-glass, will be shown the Surrey Hills in the distance. And there was a sight dearer to his heart than any hills, to be seen without the aid of any spy-glass. "My bed faces the river, so by perking up upon my haunches, and supporting my carcass"—never a heavy burden!

—"with my elbows, without much wrying my neck, I can see the white sails glide by the bottom of the King's Bench Walks as I lie in my bed." Here they lived until 1809; when, their landlord needing the rooms for his own use, they had to uproot themselves again. But this time it was a transplantation only, not a banishment outside that garden of their memories and loves. They found new rooms at No. 4 Inner Temple Lane, "far more commodious and roomy. I have two rooms on the third floor and five rooms above, with an inner staircase to myself, and all new painted, etc., and all for £30 a year! I came into them on Saturday week; and on Monday following Mary was taken ill with the fatigue of moving; and affected, I believe, by the novelty of the home, she could not sleep, and I am left alone with a maid quite a stranger to me, and she has a month or two's sad distraction to go through. What sad large pieces it cuts out of life—out of *her* life, who is getting rather old; and we may not have many years to live together. I am weaker, and bear it worse than I ever did. But I hope we shall be comfortable by and by. The rooms are delicious, and the best look backwards into Hare Court, where there is a Pump always going. Just now it is dry. Hare Court trees come in at the window, so that 'tis like living in a garden. I try to persuade myself it is much pleasanter than Mitre Court; but alas! the household gods are slow to come in a new mansion."

This one passage may serve for many more, and many of them more desolate, in which we see the kind of agony by which his life was punctuated, as by revisitings of a dagger to his heart. But he had determined that he and Mary should take "what snatches of pleasure we can between the acts"; and it is time to speak of these. The

pleasure of both their lives, not in snatches, but a continuous happiness, was their own universal kind-heartedness, an understanding love of all human beings, a goodwill to men, which found its overt and famed expression in a wide circle of absolute and sincere friendships, but which was never all engrossed by existing engagements in that kind, however numerous. There was that in Lamb which attracted all who met him; an individuality strongly and even quaintly marked, even as his personal appearance was; but marked by nothing so strongly as by a clear simplicity, an instant honest kindness of regard, and all that is meant by the negation of arrogance, vanity or imitativeness. And the friends who were drawn toward him by some intellectual interest or by this unique and quiet, self-unconscious personal charm, were kept true to that first prepossession by what longer familiarity revealed to them of the infinite variety of his discernments and his sympathies, and the always staunch and immediate integrity of his character. We need not wonder, then, that he had many friends; for they gathered around him early, and as none ever left him, so he never cast off any because they might be, in the world's eye, persons of little worth, weeds and strays, or, in his own word, burs: holding always that "they were good and loving burs for all that." Already in 1801, just before the removal from Southampton Buildings, he wrote, jocosely, but not without truth: "My present lodgings resemble a minister's levée, I have so increased my acquaintance since I have resided in town." And the minister's levées were more thronged than ever henceforth, and should constitute, indeed, the principal matter of description in any large account of the seventeen years lived in the Temple. For besides that seldom an evening or an afternoon passed without its casual droppers-in, the minister set

aside one evening in the week—those famous Wednesdays—in which the door was opened to all his friends, and the more who came, the larger welcome. To Talfourd—and most conveniently in Mr Fitzgerald's excellent Life of Lamb, which is a redaction of Talfourd, and can be bought separately and quite cheaply in a single volume—the Reader would do well to turn for a vivid and memorable description of these receptions. Having read it, he will carry with him through life a recollection, as if he had been there, of the scene in the book-studded, low-roofed room, its ceiling stained with tobacco-smoke: of the little groups of whist-players, sedately, but not desperately intent on the game, and looking up to get news of the theatre from a late arrival who had just dropped in: of the simple cold joint on a side table (in earlier and poorer days, the simpler round of cheese, with bread unlimited) and the huge jug of porter, frequently replenished from a famed Fleet-street tap, which supported the milder virtues of the earlier evening: of the cards put away by and by, as the hot water, with its better accompaniments, appeared and the conversation began to be more animated, more spirited, more characteristic of a gathering which included such men as Hazlitt and Godwin, Leigh Hunt and Thomas Hood, Manning and Basil Montagu, "Ionic" Talfourd and "English" Barry Cornwall, Haydon the painter, and Elliston or Kemble or other lights of the stage, perhaps once or twice De Quincey, and, when he was in town, Wordsworth; to say nothing of others, less famous, but not less important there, such as Admiral Burney, who had been taught by Eugene Aram and been round the world with Captain Cook; or Wainewright, a dandified but indubitably accomplished *littérateur* who was one day to do more in the way of murders than ever Eugene Aram: and a many

notables besides, from the poetic and, as we would say now-a-days, decadent or neurotic Charles Lloyd to that borderland Anakite—a stark mosstrooper, born out of his time—the good Scot, Allan Cunningham. Not all of these gathered on any one evening, it is understood; but these are samples of the ingredients in a mixture which varied slightly from week to week. And talking of ingredients: "Miss Lamb moves gently about to see that each modest stranger is duly served; turning now and then an anxious loving eye on Charles, which is softened into a half-humorous expression of resignation to inevitable fate, as he mixes his second tumbler!" Only on the occasions when Coleridge made one of the company, all lesser talk of lesser minds, criticism or witticism, died away, and everyone was eager to be only a listener to the great monologist. For the discourse of the "inspired charity-boy" had lost nothing in inspiration, and had gained much by the knowledge and the spiritual momentum of the years. So true it is that he was "one who ever made way"—in boyhood, in visionary youth, in authoritative and rabbinical age—"who ever made way by a charm, the charm of voice, of aspect, of language, above all by the intellectual charm of new, moving, luminous ideas."[1] And as that list of the more "intellectual" intimates of the brother and sister is very far from being complete—not to say that it omits altogether many people of very simple culture and very humble position, who were equally dear and intimate friends of theirs, and some of them pensioners on the bounty of Charles, which was royally disproportionate to his income, but was also the only extravagance he allowed himself—so the list by no means comprehends every direction of their social radiance. They shone into many houses, besides keeping their own always warm

[1] Pater, "Appreciations," p. 68.

for their friends. There were no such welcome, and no such likely, droppers-in upon the Hoods or the Hunts or the Novellos, as Mary and Charles Lamb: and into the concerns of such as these they entered with sympathy or joy, as if they had all been one great family. Not that Charles Lamb cared for every kind of company. Almost every kind of man he could tolerate, *quâ* man; but company has its claims; and against all pretentious people, and severe-minded people, and arrogant, puffed-up or affected persons—especially against the aggressive prig, that intellectual combination of the would-be despot and the conceited fool—he defended himself, and whoever else was near, by all the artifices, ruses, ambuscadoes, turns, assaults, outrages even, within the command of his subtle and resourceful talent. It was humour that he was wont to call to his aid on such occasions; not sarcasm, however, nor derision nor banter, which might seem to make the offender its object—but some sheer breaking away into rank idiocy or freakish obstreperousness which gave (he cared not) the severe-minded person a very low opinion of that Mr Lamb's manners and intellectuals for life. But the chances were that the severe person exercised a more mitigated apostolate of wisdom and righteousness until it was time to withdraw; and that was all that the gentle-hearted Charles cared for. It was his way—Heine had another way—of being a good soldier in the War of Liberation of Humanity: liberation from contemptuous bores and all pragmatic and unkindly people. He prized average human nature better than not to scorn those who set themselves ostentatiously above their company. Thus on one occasion at least he found himself in the same room with Thomas Carlyle. We do not know in what manner precisely he dealt with the obnoxious presence: but we may gather pretty securely from the

blast or ink-blotch of scorn devoted to him in the Sage's Reminiscences, that Charles had recognised that there was a call for him to ACT, and had stood to his guns like a man. Nor was there any reason why he should mind being mistaken for a fool by those who were so mistaken concerning their own wisdom, a matter more properly within the province of their knowledge. His friends knew that he always made not only "the best pun" but also "the best remark in the course of an evening," that "his serious conversation, like his serious writing, was still his best," and that "nobody stammered out such fine piquant deep eloquent things, in half a dozen sentences, as he."[1]

It will be seen, then, that although the great public of readers knew but little about Lamb's work before the beginning of Elia, to the small public of writers—of contemporary men of talent and genius—he was both well known personally and recognised as one whose already-published work gave him a place in literature which none envied (because it was his), but to which all looked up in a spirit of large homage and admiration. The tokens of this are to be found not only in references to him in the "London Magazine" before he became a contributor there, but also in the earlier "Indicator" and the yet earlier "Examiner" and elsewhere. And the *Elia* Essays, wonderful as they are in their variety of subject and mood and their richness in literary quality, do not seem to have surprised a single friend of his. It is an eloquent fact, which has not been sufficiently pondered! Why *he* was not on the staff of the "London Magazine" from the beginning is hard to explain; for his friends were there, and he knew the Editor well, John Scott, lately of the "Champion" and the best Editor of his generation,

[1] Hazlitt, "Plain Speaker."

if not of several since. Howbeit in August 1820 the Magazine contained an article with the unpromising title of *Recollections of the South-Sea House* and with, by way of signature, only the thinly-fantastic and della-Cruscan-looking pseudonym "Elia."[1] Unpromising it must have seemed, indeed: until one read the first brief paragraph and began to have a sudden sense of strangeness and of initiations, and of a new world of old things opening out at one's feet: and until one read the second paragraph, and had a sense of growing music, and followed in a kind of rapture whither the sound—sound become sentient rather than an object of sense—led; through winding clauses in which all the ages of the world merge and become simultaneous, and the atmosphere is heavy with its weight of meanings, and dense with the sublimations of matter outworn —past "dusty maps of Mexico, dim as dreams, and soundings of the Bay of Panama"—by "vast cellarages" and "unsunned heaps," with glimmerings of Mammon gloating in the shadows there—until we discover ourselves again, out in the air of this world, liberated from that magic in the end only by "the blast of the breaking of the famous BUBBLE!" Seldom does there happen in a long literature such an avatar of literary powers as this; such an opening music. The twenty or thirty lines are themselves a literature, albeit they are but the opening passage of an Essay; and that Essay only the first of fifty or sixty or more, full of variety and temperament

[1] This was the name of an old fellow-clerk of his at the South-Sea House, an Italian, and apparently in some small way an Author. The use of his name as signature to this paper was a little practical joke of Lamb's, who went along to see his old friend, whom he had not seen for a year, meaning to rally him on his contribution to the "London." But he found that Elia had been a good while dead—"So the name has fairly devolved to me, I think."

and relief, yet every one answering, according to its kind, to the standard of a manifold excellence which Elia set himself in this beginning. And the main bulk of these sixty and more Essays, embodying so much originality and reflection, and shedding into the world such a solar richness of humour, such a stream of sunshine gaiety and kindness—they were written almost in as many consecutive months by one whose lot in life was so tragic, and whose days were claimed by office labour that was never congenial to him, however it may have been salutary. Nor were they even written in the quiet of the Temple. For again I must ask the Reader to step back a few years, and then forward. There were still many migrations: but the best of all came suddenly, and with least suffering.

At the end of seventeen years' residence in the Temple they decided, for reasons that are a little obscure, to give up chambers and go into lodgings at 20 Russell Street, Covent Garden—renting a first floor suite at the corner, over a brazier's shop—"a place all alive with noise and bustle," but yet "in the individual spot I like best in all this great city. The theatres, with all their noises. Covent Garden, dearer to me than any gardens of Alcinoüs, where we are morally sure of the earliest peas and 'sparagus. Bow-street, where the thieves are examined, within a few yards of us. Mary had not been here four-and-twenty hours before she saw a thief. She sits at the window working; and casually throwing out her eyes, she sees a concourse of people coming this way, with a constable to conduct the solemnity. These little incidents agreeably diversify a female life." Perhaps the last remark gives us an inkling of what was part, at least, of their motive in leaving the Temple. But it had been a fearful wrench; and he has some comfort in thinking that they will

never be able to strike root so deeply in any other soil, and that "if they take us up from here, it will cost no blood and groans, like mandrakes pulled up." The Temple life went on, only more so. In Russell House, as Lamb called his lodgings, the minister held his levées (the day being changed to Thursday, however), which were now more thronged than ever. For here he added yet further to his circle of acquaintance, especially among theatrical folk; some of the names already mentioned belong, indeed, to this rather than the Temple period. And here, for the first time in his life, he began to feel that man could have too much company. It was not the Thursday evenings that did it, but all the hours of all the days. The good fellows who dropped in perpetually, and whom he liked so well that, though he heartily wished them at perdition, he could not hurt them by letting it be seen that they were a nuisance, much less throw them downstairs as a friend equally genial but less sensitive and more robust might have done. And it was not so much those, either, as the men who, when he had been feeling worn down by the continual presence of others during the whole length of the business-day, would catch him issuing from the office and see him home, and, in the kindness of their hearts, would still entertain him with their talk while he ate his dinner: "to prevent my eating alone—a process absolutely necessary to my wretched digestion. Oh, the pleasure of eating alone!—eating my dinner alone! let me think of it." This in a long letter to Wordsworth in 1818, which must be read, of course, with understanding and allowance. There is a truthful picture within the large exaggeration, the literary revelling in the humour of his woes. It was during the Russell House period that he became acquainted with the young brothers Ollier, of Vere

Street, who collected and published his "Works" in two volumes; which, the author thought, "were admirably adapted for giving away"—and he gave generously. To the Russell House period, finally, belong the "Essays of Elia," the whole of the first series and about half of the second. Not that all the Essays were actually penned in those classic precincts: for during part of this time he was in the habit of escaping, in the interests of composure and of composition, to some rural lodging out Dalston way, just as he had rented a room somewhere "outside," for the same purpose, in early Temple days, when engaged upon that unfortunate "Mr H." These banishments of himself to the back of beyond, and the almost complete cessation of correspondence during 1820–1823, show that he took his work on the "London Magazine" very seriously, and dealt himself very hard measure rather than not do his duty absolutely by the generations yet to come. And all this time the office work went on, his responsibilities there increasing as his position improved; and he feeling more and more unfit, through increasing nervous derangement and some flagging of general powers of reaction and buoyancy, to bear the weight of that kind of responsibility without a degree of continual anxiety that became, in the next few years, a haunting wretchedness.

Perhaps it was the restlessness of this condition, rather than the desire to gain a comparative security from interruption, that prompted their migration, apparently about the end of August 1823, to the out-of-London remoteness of Colebrook Row, off the City Road of to-day. Islington had always been classic ground for him; and his old friend the New River—to trace the sources of which had been a dream, and at last a venturous endeavour, of his

imaginative boyhood—the New River flowed by the garden domain of Colebrook Cottage, even as the King of Rivers had watered "the pleasant places" in which his childhood grew. Here for the first time he was a British householder, and had a garden of his own. "A spacious garden with vines (I assure you), pears, strawberries, parsnips, leeks, carrots, cabbages, to delight the heart." This removal seems for a time to have given a fillip to his spirits. He prunes and gardens amain, and babbles of jargonelles and green-stuffs. He begins, he says, to understand in what sense they speak of Father Adam. "I recognise the paternity while I watch my tulips!" This residence at Colebrook Row is made memorable by the circumstance that his friend George Dyer, whose innocent heart and most unworldly head, full of antiquarian daydreams and library dust, Lamb fairly doted to think on and to joke about—this singular and inestimable friend walked out of their cottage one noonday and, instead of taking the path towards the gate, walked straight forward and disappeared in the New River. How he was saved must be read in the Essay *Amicus Redivivus*, subject to some impertinent historical corrections to be found among the Notes. Elia was still a mainstay of the "London," but feeling the connection less genial; for the proprietors had managed to alienate many of their best men, who were also his friends. It may have been partly on this account that he began a series of lesser contributions in another quarter at the beginning of 1825; but still more may it have expressed the need for escape, for change, for the stimulation of new connections and a new pseudonym. For in truth his health was failing, or spirits flagging, at a good rate about this time. The sense of office constraint, and the pressure of responsibility, were becoming more than he could bear, after the continual

draught there had been upon his nerves all his life-time. Already in 1822 and earlier he had confessed himself ominously tired of official confinement. "Thirty years have I served the Philistines!" he exclaims. . . "You don't know how wearisome it is to breathe the air of four pent walls, without relief, day after day, all the golden hours of the day between ten and four, without ease or interposition. . . Oh, for a few years between the grave and the desk! They are the same, save that at the latter you are the outside machine." And so his pen wanders on, in the old strain of humorous exaggeration—seeking to take off the accent of distress from his description of a state of feeling that was only too real. And it was becoming ominous: his friends in the office and out of it saw that a break-down of his health, or a worse collapse of his mind, was not impossible, unless he received that freedom which was now not so much a craving of his heart as an organic need of his whole nature. Wise friends induced him to put his resignation, and therewith medical certificates, in the hands of the Directors of the Company. He had a short period of agonising anxiety, not deeming that the term of his service, or the value of his services, made him secure of a liberal, or indeed of any, retiring allowance. But on the evening of the Twenty-Ninth of March 1825, when about to leave for home, he was called into the presence of the Directors: to hear some considerate enquiries as to his monetary position, and a graceful speech about the length and value of his services, and a proposal that, as he needed rest and had well earned it, he should date his retirement from that evening, accepting from the Company a yearly pension of £450, less £9 deducted to secure a sufficient annuity for his sister Mary, in case she should survive him. And so that evening he went home, as he tells us, FOR EVER

—for he felt that he had all Eternity before him, and that it was all his own time!

It was not a very long eternity, and it had few incidents. Its general character was a slowly deepening gloom bravely fought against by the old gay spirits; gay spirits often very forlorn, but always faithful and so ever keeping up the fight. At first the Essay-writing, which had once almost stopped (there were only two contributions to the "London" during 1824), began again, and there was a run of writings of varying merit during 1825 and 1826. From the literary point of view the best result of his emancipation was, however, the renewal of his correspondence; nearly a third of the whole body of his "Letters" being of date subsequent to his retirement from the India House. Another product of this period was the "Extracts from the Garrick Plays," which he contributed to Hone's "Table Book," not more impelled by interest in a favourite subject than by the desire to give a helping hand to a worthy man much at odds with the world he lived in, and a man of good unrefined honesty of judgment and of a toilsome ambidextrous bookishness withal. The same motive of kindness was behind most of the other literary efforts in these closing years. In 1831 he published the volume entitled "Album Verses," a collection of stray pieces which he prized, himself, somewhat below their value, though their note, to be sure, was not Miltonic. The critics smote the poor little book as if he had made no humbler claim for it: whereas it was merely this, that his young friend Edward Moxon, a specially dear familiar of their house, had set up as a Publisher, and wished to have a book by Charles Lamb on his list. It was from the same motive, and yielding to the same solicitation, that he collected in 1833 "The Last Essays of Elia," which contains, as the Reader will see on turning to the

Notes, three Essays that were contributed, along with others, to "The Englishman's Magazine." This had been a venture of Moxon's in 1831, which did not prosper, and therefore was, by Lamb's good advice, dropped in time. And such stray instances: of a hand, that had finished its day's work, remembering yet its old habit and taking up the pen again, to run on, for a few casual moments more. And from that hand could come nothing that was not of good mark, and better than most men's best. But it lacked the purpose that was behind it of old: the strength of the heart was called elsewhere.

The state of Mary's health induced them to make visits, sometimes of considerable duration, to Enfield, where at first they were boarders. Finally they decided in 1827 to take a house there, so Colebrook Cottage was given up for good. "*No* health at Islington," he wrote: "yet 'twas with some pains that we were evulsed. You may find some of our flesh sticking to the doorposts. To change habitations is to die to them, and in my time I have died seven deaths." But now they were settled for life (alas! again for life), and he hoped good from it for Mary: and, for himself, he would be able to take an occasional trip into town "to breathe the purer air of the Metropolis." But the very night that they moved into their new house, which he had described so proudly, Mary was taken ill again. This time the darkness lasted for three months; and each attack was now followed by a long period of depression and mental wretchedness, hardly less lamentable than the delirium out of which she had brought her soul alive. A sadder letter than the one in which he speaks of this attack is that written to Bernard Barton in 1829. Again Mary is from home; and his spirit is now so broken—not broken, but deeply "down suppressed" by the heaping of affliction—

that even a visit to London has done nothing for him. He has passed by houses and places—all empty caskets now. "I have ceased to care almost for anybody. The bodies I cared for are in graves, or dispersed. . . I got home on Thursday, convinced that I was better to get home to my hole at Enfield, and hide like a sick cat in my corner. . . But less than a month, I hope, will bring home Mary, and the old feelings will come back again, and we shall drown old sorrows over a game of picquet again." In this year (1829) they gave up what he *now* called "the pompous troublesome trifle called housekeeping" —the hope, that is, of having a home of their own—and entered into residence as boarders with an old couple called Westwood, who lived next door. He describes them with enjoyment and kindness in a long letter to Wordsworth, and "put up" with them for three years. In both senses of that phrase; for one gathers that the Westwoods proved an oppressive old couple, and the time lived with them, indeed most of the Enfield time, looked hateful in retrospect. Mary's condition was getting more grievous: he looks back with longing to the old times when she was ill for "nice little durations of six weeks or so," and rallied her whole powers to her, almost instantly, on recovery. Now, in 1832, those durations are so long, and are followed by such protracted wretchedness, and the remainder of the time is so anxious with lookings forward—that he decides she can no longer live with him. Very well, he must live with her. Which means this. There were a Mr and Mrs Walden in Edmonton, whose profession it was to take in mental patients, and who had had charge of Mary before. He arranges that Mary shall live with them now always, and they shall take no other patients—and he also shall lodge and board there. Thus, in a word, after a lifetime of love and endurance, Charles Lamb

virtually made himself the inmate of a private madhouse, rather than ever go from the side of the sister whom he had taken under his care for life. What it meant, and the spirit in which it was done, may be gathered from two passages, with which the story of this long devotion may close. To Wordsworth, in May 1833: "I see little of her: alas! I too often hear her. *Sunt lachrymæ rerum!* and you and I must bear it"—(Dorothy Wordsworth was ill at this time). Finally, to Miss Fryer, in February 1834. "In one word, be less uneasy about me. I bear my privation very well; I am not in the depths of desolation as heretofore. Your admonitions are not lost upon me. Your kindness has sunk into my heart. Have faith in me! It is no new thing for me to be left to my sister. When she is not violent, her rambling chat is better to me than the sense and sanity of this world. Her heart is obscured, not buried; it breaks out occasionally; and one can discern a strong mind struggling with the billows that have gone over it. I could be nowhere happier than under the same roof with her. Her memory is unnaturally strong; and from ages past, if we may so call the earliest records of our poor life, she fetches thousands of names and things that never would have dawned on me again, and thousands from the ten years she lived before me. What took place from early girlhood to her coming of age principally lives again (every important thing, and every trifle) in her brain, with the vividness of real presence. For twelve hours incessantly she will pour out without intermission all her past life, forgetting nothing, pouring out name after name to the Waldens, as in a dream; sense and nonsense; truths and errors huddled together; a medley between inspiration and possession. What things we are! I know you will bear with me, talking of these things. It seems to ease me, for

I have nobody to tell these things to now." Reading this, one feels that not half has been told, for it is all inexpressible : and one thinks of what a professional wise-man like Carlyle saw—all that he could see—in Charles and Mary Lamb, and how his wisdom and charity expressed itself towards those loving, fragile and heroic beings : and one echoes "*what things we are!*"

And yet even in these dark days he never showed a sad face to any friends who called, but mustered all his good spirits to make the hour indeed a friendly one, and pleasurable. And some moments of the time—he could not but see his visitors cheerfully on their way, at leaving—would be spent, to be sure, in his favourite Inn along the road. From this portal even Wordsworth did not reluct in such company ; and here Christopher North, forgetting that he was a Professor of Moral Philosophy, took off his pot of porter like a good man. And there was still gaiety in the letters, and in one of the last an Elian richness of humour and ruefulness for a fault committed. Most of all, there was kindness in them, and solicitude for others, and a bespeaking of friendly interest for some who were in distress. But it was a melancholy year ; and its darkest cloud came to him in the heart of summer. On the 25th of July Coleridge died. Many had been the friends of Lamb, and great had been the joy that he took in them, and the honest, boyish liking, or happier affection, that he gave to each. But the friend of all friends, when everything was said, or when all was silence, was the friend of his boyhood at Christ's. Towards Coleridge the feeling of Lamb throughout life was something that it requires the best stretch of lesser men's poor faculties of mind and heart to divine, at moments, rather than to grasp. It asked no tokens, and it gave few : it was more fain to dissemble its presence than

express its power: only it was there—the most
nplex fact of his mind, the ultimate and deepest
ıg in his nature, second only, if indeed second, to
devotion of reverence and love and wonder with
ich he regarded his sister Mary. And Coleridge
, although he saw but little of them, especially in
r years, knew himself bound to the brother and
er by a bond that nothing in life could break. A
e before he died, he read over an early poem in
ich he had spoken of them: and under its title he
ote their names, thus:

CHARLES AND MARY LAMB,
Dear to my heart, yea as it were *my heart*.

d so, when the news of Coleridge's death came, it
a blow too stupefying to be felt. "When I
rd of the death of Coleridge, it was without grief."
vas a thing so great and terrible, that what could
do but play with it? He went about, thinking
ıothing else; but never letting the thought enter
mind in its own form, its own dimensions. He
ıld say wonderingly to himself, "*Coleridge is dead*";
with the same exclamation, suddenly and whim-
lly uttered, he would interrupt, again and again,
friends who called and talked with him. It was
range ruse of a wonderful nature, feeling its own
l; it was like the woman in "Master-Builder,"
o dared not think of her babies that had been
ıed alive, and therefore babbled all her life long
:he dolls and the old lace that she had lost in the
flagration. There was a time when he could
ı every event in his life into a piece of literature;
not now, and not this. Only, four months later
vas asked to write something in an Album, and
vrote of Coleridge: a few sentences, scarce equal-
a page of this letterpress, but imperishable. "He
the proof and touchstone of all my cogitations.

. . . What was his mansion is consecrated to me a chapel." This was written at Edmonton on the 21st of November: and about five weeks later he lay in the churchyard there. Late in December (some day after the 22nd) he went out one morning, to take his usual walk. Not far from his own door he stumbled against a stone, and fell, bruising his face. Though a great walker, he had always a slight impediment of his feet, an inferior stammer: he was not lame, but his gait was slightly plantigrade. This, with the abstraction and woefulness of that time, accounts for the stumble. The bruise seemed nothing at first; but in a day or two, erysipelas set in. If he had only had a little strength—but what strength had he? He sank rapidly. His last conscious words faintly expressed kindness and hospitality to those who had been hastily summoned to his side. He then drifted to unconsciousness; and, still murmuring the names of good friends old and new, "he sank into death as placidly as into sleep" on the 27th of December—on the festival of St. John and the eve of the Innocents—1834.

And what of her who was left? To him only one thing had seemed more terrible than to lose her: that was, to leave her in the world alone. "Mary," he had once said in company, in a burst of affection, masking itself as brusqueness, "Mary, you must die first." And she answered quietly, with the look of inexpressible gentleness which always rested on her brother, and with her wise little trick of nodding assent, "Yes, Charles; I must die first." Well, in a sense she had died first. At the time of his death her mind was in full eclipse; and for a twelvemonth after, she was barely in a condition to comprehend her loss. When the clouds cleared completely, her wisdom and love became a strength to her. But for some years she would not leave Edmon-

ton, because he was there; and when visitors came to drink tea with her of an afternoon, she always took them to see him also—her steps, when she went out of doors, turning ever towards his grave. Let her biographer, Mrs Gilchrist, say the last words: "Lucid intervals continued, for a few years longer, to alternate with ever-lengthening periods of darkness. That mysterious brain was not even yet wholly wrecked by the eighty years of storms that had broken over it. Even when the mind seemed gone, the heart kept some of its fine instincts. She learned to bear her solitude very patiently, and was gentle and kind always. Towards 1840 her friends persuaded her to remove to Alpha Road, St. John's Wood, that she might be nearer to them. Thirteen years in all she survived her brother, and then was laid in the same grave with him at Edmonton, May 28th, 1847; a scanty remnant of the old friends gathering round,—'Martin Burney refusing to be comforted.'"

In the foregoing pages I have followed almost exclusively one thread of narrative, in order to present —and that as little as possible in my own words— the story of the intertwined lives of this brother and sister; their one life, rather, of double-singleness and mutual devotion in a world in which they stood so strangely alone, who were yet so infinitely friendly and rich in friends. For this is the fact in the life of Charles Lamb which is not only paramount, but pervading; equally authoritative at the circumference of any criticism of his work and at the core of any attempts which we may make to comprehend his personality. I have therefore passed by many circumstantialities, particulars, anecdotes, illustrations, instances, sayings: things which people like because

they seem to give them a short cut to acquaintance with an interesting character, but still more because such things are readily produced in conversation and do not take up much room in the mind. But, really, Charles Lamb is worthy of all the room that the minds of any of us can make for him, even at the cost of some demolitions, expansions and rebuildings. Of his character, in the narrower sense—of his prevailing kindness of disposition, his unselfishness of heart, the unshakable integrity of his loyal and simple nature—it should not be necessary to add anything here, though it is true that not half has been told in the preceding pages. And to try to do justice to his personality as a whole would commit one to an attempt too great: especially too great at the end of an Essay which has already far outrun its ordained limits. And indeed Charles Lamb is not to be described, but only to be known, and best by his familiars; to be known by each Reader carrying away, from the abundance which he offers to all, just that portion which *he* can use, that impression which he can most intimately live with. If it is partial, it will have its own perfection, and will be better than any fuller understanding of other writers. Even of his personal appearance, it is said, no portrait tells the whole truth; and the extant examples all tell different tales. Hazlitt, reverencing the power and beauty of the noble head, so finely poised on the shoulders—a head worthy of Aristotle, said Leigh Hunt, the features as of Francis Bacon—Hazlitt painted him as a Venetian senator. Another friend, and equally an admirer, having an affinity, a sympathy, with the quaintly dapper body, bird-like in its essential slenderness, and tightly buttoned up in its clerkly suit of black, and supported perilously on so immaterial legs, which were always tightly gaitered—this friend made an etching of him which would have passed for a

caricature of some old-world customer, yet was never so intended. In the word-portraits of him, also, there is great, though not so great dissimilarity. But most of them speak of the fine eyes, the gaze at once benign and penetrating; and all expatiate upon that wonderful smile of Charles Lamb's, which was one of the moral phenomena of the world, so bland, and sweet, and relenting it was, like a kind heart forgetting its own pain. And perhaps to one or other of these aspects of him we must always come back, when we try to give an account to ourselves of the man or his work. But in the end the simultaneity of them all, and that oneness of a complex and sincere humanity which was Charles Lamb, this will still remain a mystery, only to be comprehended a little by love.

Were I writing an extended study of Lamb, in which there should be ample space to explain what might seem not quite obvious or to defend what might be oppugned as paradoxical, I should make a great point of insisting that his intellect was the primary and really great thing in him, greater and rarer far than his humour or any other separable qualities recognised in literature; just as the intellect, the independent thinking-power of Burns, is, all things taken into account, more astonishing, and more immediately and inherently his, than even his lyrical gift. In general one may say that the world grasps all greatness by the narrower end—and sometimes whittles it away to bring it into handier comprehension—though narrowness is, to be sure, not the word for what I mean in distinguishing between humour and intellect. But the intellect enters so much into the humour, and any attempt to separate them for momentary purposes of instruction would have to be so sandbagged round with qualifications —provisoes against inconsiderate attack while the

lesson was in progress—that there would be no space left here in which to contemplate the truths for the sake of which, and in order to bring them into view, the separation or analysis was made. Let it be said quite boldly, however, as a truth thrown from the window to take its chances in the street, that while the popular hearsay notion about Charles Lamb—a notion widely diffused, beyond the circle of the Reading Public—is, that he was an extremely amusing man with a stammer, a devil of a joker, and the author of a number of (unknown) puns: and while the prevailing notion about him among a considerable multitude of those who read books and who even have read a little of Lamb (at least the *Dissertation upon Roast Pig*) is too apt to begin and end in a genial conviction that he is a quaint and charming writer, and that his humour is unlike anybody else's (as everybody else's humour is): yet in real fact what we have primarily in Lamb is a thinking and understanding faculty of the rarest order that ever expressed itself through the vehicle of English speech. Only when we reach the very highest, Bacon or Shakespeare, do we make acquaintance with a mind so continuously cognitive, with so direct a gaze into a multitude of things, with such a habit of being in immediate contact with the matter of its thought *every time as if it were the first time*. In this latter respect he is perhaps superior to Bacon, who had more culture than he could assimilate, though not more than he could use, and who might have said with more truth than Lamb, "Books think for me." That he is deeply inferior to Bacon in other respects is not, of course, denied, nor yet that he is inferior to Coleridge in particular respects. I am talking, for the moment, only of that habit of looking straight, and discerning afresh, and putting a sincere primary mental act into each judgment, which is the spirit that accompanies you

through every page that Lamb has written, more than in any others known to me. It is astonishing how soon we all get tired of thinking, and begin to find the truth distasteful simply because it is the truth. In other words, it is astonishing how soon we arrive at a sufficient stock of views to serve our time, and thereafter, when we seem to be looking at a thing, have really made up our minds about it with our eyes shut. We do not think about *it* at all, but we think something that we thought before, and so convince ourselves that we are still alive and thinking. Our vanity has imposed upon us an obscurant superstition: a devotion to our mental past. Our thoughts of yesterday are a jealous God: rather, they are like the elder-born of Egypt (was it Egypt?) hating the younger brother who shall disinherit them. Other reasons, more or less metaphorical and profane, might be given for the fact, but the fact would remain unaltered: that the amount of honest, quiet, direct immediate judgment which goes into what we consider the expression of our intelligence is enormously small; and that a mechanical and inexpensive repositing of our unfortunate mental position is what we allude to, generally, when we say "I think," there being no thought, but a hatred and repugnance to thought, in the whole operation. And this is compatible even with a great deal of intellectual display, with a great deal of mental hard work. Only, when we have deducted from the whole all that is the mere maintaining of a part, the mere justifying of a position already assumed, the mere aggrandisement and consolidating of our personal Idea, as it comes back to us from the world upon which we have projected it, the mere building of a tomb, and admiring it as a trophy, over the point at which our intellectual being virtually gave up the ghost on some former day, and at which our thoughts, too loyal to

think now of wandering through Eternity, determined there to set up their rest and budge no further to the end of time—when this gross sum of repetition and prejudice has been deducted (as we must deduct a great deal on that score in the later writings and talkings of, say, Coleridge), then the amount of honest, sincere, immediate thinking and feeling, the amount of quite primary and disinterested judgment of the matter freshly in hand, will be found to be a very insufficient leaven for the whole lump of what we say and what we write. Of course the lump is marketable enough, in the absence of comparisons; it goes down very well, in all senses, because one man's batch is as heavy with its portion of death and deadweight as another's. But in Lamb we have a writer whose intelligence is all vital and always functional and sincere: in twenty baskets of *his* loaves you will hardly come upon one morsel of the stale or the unbaked: one opinion which has not the sincerity, the thrill of truth, of a first contact with nature. We may say that it is his conscientiousness that controls him, or that it is his sympathy that informs, and what not; but in great matters and in small, he is always saying just the fresh and the true thing, always getting into contact with the fact, the thought, the personality; unbiassed by any recollections of former remark, uncorrupted into consistency by egotism. To this fundamental quality of his—this untiring justness of mind, and this protean fluidity and apprehensiveness—his Letters supply a more direct initiation even than his Essays. For in them we see the freer and more open work-and-play of his mind, the fineness, precision and clean strength of the intellectual web and woof not yet obscured for us by those other values, of richness and beauty, which do a little obscure it from us in the Essays. And yet it underlies every page of them also, and is the better

part of the pledge of their immortality. But on this matter I have said more than my allotted space here justifies. Let me only remind the Reader of one fact, which is too much forgotten ; namely, that to all the men of first-class ability, of talent, and of genius who formed his circle of friends and acquaintances, Lamb was attractive and an object of admiration not alone, nor even mainly, by reason of his wit, his humour or his sweetness of disposition : but frankly because they found in him intellectual qualities, a justness of thought and a range of discernments, a width of sympathy and a depth and truth of judgment, to which the best of them would willingly bow the head. This noble deference to Lamb is one of the most striking things we meet in all the source-literature of the subject, though it is almost completely ignored in the subsequent and present-day literature of criticism and causerie. Not to multiply proofs of the honour in which his intellect was held in the meridian period of his powers and to the end of his life, let me point out how early its presence was recognised. Lamb had a long boyhood, and the active and pregnant powers of his mind came into operation somewhat slowly. At the beginning of 1800 he was still in the making, not yet emerged from what I have called his first period, his period of adolescent wistfulness and tender poetry. Yet already in that year Coleridge, referring to him casually in a letter to Godwin, writes such a passage as this : "My poor Lamb ! how cruelly afflictions crowd upon him ! I am glad that you think of him as I think. He has an affectionate heart, a mind *sui generis ;* his taste acts so as to appear like the unmechanic simplicity of an instinct—in brief, he is worth a hundred men of *mere* talent. Conversation with the latter tribe is like the use of leaden bells—one warms by exercise. Lamb every now and then *irradiates*, and the beam,

though single and fine as a hair, is yet rich with colours, and I both see and feel it."

But this general position having been a little insisted upon, one must add immediately that if the world has been too apt to overlook the rare *intellectual* value and power in Lamb's work, almost to the point of mistaking his character in consequence, nobody is so much to blame for the fact as Lamb himself. If we do not thank him enough, or if we thank him wrongly, it is because his abundance in giving has buried from our own knowledge a good half of the gift, so that we are virtually indebted to him for much more than we are conscious of having overtly received. For those powers of the intellect that I speak of, that habit of fresh unfalsified thought and that felicity of judgment, are found always so richly accompanied with other qualities besides, are so interfused with the whole expression of his personality —so controlled by his kindness, so blended with his humour, so touched with his sense of tears, so refined by his subtlety, so flavoured by his relish, so transfigured, at times, by his tragic critical imagination— that it is small wonder if we have little consciousness of separable opinions and thoughts in all that we have read, and are only aware of a continuous presence and a charm, an emotion and a power. The case is, indeed, unique. There is no other English prose writer whose work is so variously charged, above and beyond its fundamental rightness and strength, with all the enriching qualities of absolute and sheer literature, or so instinct with the fulness of communicable life. There is no other in whom dead structure, skeleton, framework, formula, counts for so little : in whom we may so truly say that everything is vital and personal, everything fused and felt, nothing that is said being a stark proposition, a bleak thought in the air, but always the expression of an entire, moving,

friendly nature, which is not advancing opinions on their merits, but merely uttering its very self. Even in the instances in which he has a truth or a wiser prejudice to commend, a literary or moral thesis to maintain, the better part of the whole argument comes still by implication; not in the logic of his syllogisms but in the wisdom which supplied him with the premises, and in the disposition of the heart which first made him so wise. For this reason it is that we neither make any estimate of the amount of implicit thought, of previous intellectual energy, that may have gone to the formation of a mind so full, so central and so true; nor do we often separate from their first genial and generic accompaniments, from the endearing connotation of his personality, even those occasional opinions on life and principles of criticism which he has set forth somewhat more in the common ways of demonstrative reasoning. Mostly what he has given us still remains his, and to recollect it is to summon him also into remembrance. And this is only a way of saying that a thought has become a human thing, and that what might have been the dry bones of a thesis, lives with some of the power of an affection. He has humanised whatever he touched, and he gave the quality of his own mind to whatever he gathered from the books of other men. If moods and forms re-appeared, and an accent was caught from the tongue of ancient worthies, yet it was always so as with a difference: and the difference was always towards an expression finer, more rarefied, more essential, more liberated from the first crudity of things. In this way he is no extractor of the quintessence, but one in whom the quintessence achieves itself. For instance, although he regretted that he had been defrauded of the sweet nurture of academic institution, and though his reading throughout life lay, upon the whole, but

little in the direction of the Classics, yet there is no writer for whom the man of classical training feels so singular and intimate a partiality, and none in whom he finds so truly the fine flour of that tradition. Why? Because his favourite reading had been amongst the authors to whom the Classics were the whole of literature: and that classical influence, which in them had shown as a kind of privileged barbarism or disobedience to their mother-tongue, a crudely explicit citation of the letter and the subject-matter of other times and alien speech, is in him sublimed to a further stage, and is felt only as a continual presence of the spirit of the old scholarly tradition of all Europe. And perhaps it is only saying the same thing over again to say that there is hardly a writer, among the moderns in England, who does not seem, to one coming directly from a prolonged dealing with the works of Lamb, to present two differences from him which are immediately felt, the one as a defect, the other as a graver fault: a bareness, a want of opulence and atmosphere and heart-warmth, in the general effect of the words; and in the intention or temper something that is by comparison inurbane, ungentle —not quite free from the potentialities of the sinister and the conceited. While engaged about this Edition I have again and again been forcibly struck by this effect, as I may have had occasion to lay down a volume of Lamb and read somewhat in the books of his contemporaries and friends. Nor do I find that later generations come more prosperously out of the test of that comparison. The thought might add a new terror to being an Editor, were it not that what happens to an Editor must necessarily be, in any case, a thing of no consequence.

What we do not find in Lamb is a something, call it the element of abstract thinking, of implicit generalisation, the sense of space and distance, which

is, by the nature of language as well as the habits of our thought, more or less a factor in all style, whether the subject thereof be the categories or a broomstick. Not that we miss this element of outwardness, of expansion, in his pages; but we are aware of the difference when we read elsewhere. The difference is not altogether one of defect in him, but rather means that in these other writers there are spaces of comparative emptiness. They are not constituted so rich that they can charge their whole utterance with humanity and grace, excluding at every point the merely make-weight and the merely make-way, the transitional, the void, the east wind of the innutritious. In him it is all one banquet of many savours, and even his connecting particles are fragments of good bread. Nevertheless the difference I speak of is not entirely to be accounted for thus. There is an absence of those topics, or those fixed points of reference, which afford the most every-day literary talents a touch, a contact, with a kind of conventional and utilitarian sublimity: an absence of those positions of thought, those turns of phrase—the working formulas of the optimism that seems idealism and the piety that is only a triteness, the whole expansive nomenclature of moral commonplace and ready-made high-thinking—which give borrowed gleams of perspective to the discourse of even narrow minds. But Lamb was too honest to use what was not his own, and too humorous to be pretentious. And there was in him actually a deliberate turning away from all matters of high spiritual question, from all those pre-occupations which carry our thought outside the certainties of this world, the sheltering pale of human sympathies, into the perils of the Infinite, uncharted, unknown, *unfriendly*. He had need of the warmth of human hearts about him to keep his mind within his body, in a world where things had happened to

him that might well send the stricken soul shuddering into the night. He feared alike, for himself, but not for others less tragically dowered, the metaphysics which may lead to despair and the theologies which can make men mad or monsters. The problematical was too continuously a dweller in his own house—the need to justify the ways of God to man, even as seen in the history of one innocent woman, was too often forced upon his attention—for him to have any delight in the expatiations of adipose piety or the philosophic earnestness that never knew a grief. Existence for him and for Mary had been a gift too fateful and dark, too fraught with a burden of questions that could only be answered by tears, for him ever to refer with large assurance to those common topics of everybody else—of the meanings of life, and the nature of man, and the ascertained destiny of the world. He drew instinctively toward the particular things and the comradeships of the earth: the old places, and the old books, and the full-flavoured passages of old writing in them; but especially towards those human relationships, of which not the intelligence but the sympathies are the interpreter, the sanction and the proof. And so he has his perspective also, his atmosphere, his large air. But the lines of that perspective run inward and not outward, and meet at the centre instead of scattering to the circumference. His large air is an interior irradiation, the glow of a deep sympathy, seeking its way to the heart of hearts. If he has turned away from speculation and drawn close the curtain of thought, it is to keep out the dark and the cold; and to look with greater gladness on the faces that he loved, with the light of a human hearth upon them. And upon few faces is there a light so friendly, a glow that it is so good to see and to share in. And how could it be otherwise? For that light comes not from any

hearthstone in the world, but from the very heart of Elia, the wise, the sad, the merry, the forever kind.

And just as he has made it easy for us to receive without being well aware of it the Thought beneath his Humour and the Wisdom within his Charm, so the prevailing intimacy and friendliness we feel in reading him makes it easy for us to overlook the versatility of his mind and the wide variety of literary excellences in his work. Had he nothing but this variety, this range and manifoldness, to distinguish him from other Essayists, this alone would do it. To think of Addison in comparison is to think of monotony ; the monotony of an extensive and beautiful lawn, not without wood and water. To think of Steele is to come a little nearer, and be yet further off. With these he has been compared, and from them and many others has been deduced by the processes of criticism ; and indeed this wealth of origins which people trace for him only shows that he is certainly possessed of a rich inheritance, has his estate in every shire. From one Essay to another of his, is as great a step, often, as from one writer's books to another's, the only thing that is the same through all being the inestimable presence. Sometimes within a single Essay you will find almost every essential element of literature that can be briefly expressed, every character of perfect writing that will by any means go into a little room. As to the first point : supposing we were to credit any other writer with qualities approaching those which produced the Essay on Shakespeare's Tragedies (we might think that Coleridge, were he born again and born a little different, might have done it—or Walter Pater, with some modifications and some gifts added—or De Quincey), yet where in the works of these writers should we look to find also an analogue to the *Dissertation upon Roast Pig* or to the sweet pastorals

Mackery End and *Blakesmoor in H——shire*, or the aerial fun of *The New Year's Coming of Age*, to say nothing of the South-Sea House or of old Sarah Battle, now with God? And as to the second point —what a range is there within the narrow limits of *The Old Benchers of the Inner Temple* alone! the references to his childhood in the Temple, few and finely touched; the lovely passage upon sundials, and the plea for the retaining of the old fountains; the ninety-times quoted description of his father, under name of Lovel; the terrific portraiture of the redoubtable Thomas Coventry—a living, vulcanic sculpture, rather, advancing tremendous, breathing fire, adumbrating wrath and clouds of snuff! In *The Old Margate Hoy* there is a range not less great —greater, I think—yet the whole more subdued, unified by a continuous spirit of sub-humorous observation, ease, and strength. But indeed, as I have already said in a Note, there is infinite variety in Elia, to say nothing of the yet greater variety in Charles Lamb. For he was always something more than his works, and in his character as it was known to his friends there was always a something more than they had yet made acquaintance with. His justness of judgment was a well-head of originality and surprise, and he was essentially, when it came to the touch, more free from the shackles of idiosyncrasy than those normal persons who have scarcely a mark that we should know them by. He thus belies ever and anon those genial folk who, considering themselves his admirers, infer therefore that they understand him, and in token of this understanding do indeed display a great deal of harmless intimacy with an automaton of their own making. One single instance of what I mean by this "something more" that was always there in Charles Lamb, and always spoke greatly and freely when the time came, may be given. He was a

Londoner : the Londoner of all Londoners that ever lived: a town bird in grain, gristle and feather; one who, by all professions, would rather have died after few and merry days as a city sparrow than have lived long an eagle of the mountains, gossiping of the world with the winds of heaven and surveying an empire with a single look. It was quite a favourite foible, even with himself, to be a Londoner! And we know with tolerable precision how the irrepressible and genial admirer would use such a foible in giving *his* knowing presentment of Lamb's character—Lamb's "strongly and quaintly marked" character. He would imagine Lamb induced, Heaven knows by what force or stratagem, to leave his dear London and go on a visit to his friends Coleridge and Wordsworth at their home in the mountains. And when he got him there, there would be no end of humorous matter, indicating, with such relish, poor Lamb's lostness among all this meaningless scenery, and the sense of boredom approximating to desolation, and a quiet curse now and then at his fate, and an honest attempt to "keep it up" (for he was such a good fellow) and not let his friends see that he was wishing them all somewhere else, or wishing at least that there were some three hundred miles between them and him—and a great deal of this sort of letterpress, all showing a great deal of "subtle and sympathetic understanding of the quaint and strongly-marked character of Elia." But it would be all such absolute nonsense. For we know that once in his life he did, as it happens, make such a journey as this; and the way in which his soul answered to what the mountains said to him was very different! A score of examples besides might be quoted, all showing the fluidity of Lamb's nature, its ever-new responsiveness to sincere contact. He had, more than another—and this, were there room

to develop it, we should find to be the secret of his unexcelled critical faculty and power—he had, more than another, "that intenseness of feeling," or that intuitive intimacy of touch, "which seems to resolve itself into the element which it contemplates." And as the object of the contact was, so was the nature of the response. Touching the character of King Lear, the highest reach of the genius of Shakespeare, he writes upon it what many will consider the greatest single passage in English prose. Or he takes you into the South-Sea House. In an instant, its atmosphere is all about you as you listen or read; for the dust and the years of the old place lurk in the interstices of his syllables. You might be held there forever, so lost are you to all the world without; until he observes that "night's wheels are rattling fast over me," and lets you go.

W. M.

PREFACE

BY A FRIEND OF THE LATE ELIA

THIS poor gentleman, who for some months past had been in a declining way, hath at length paid his final tribute to nature.

To say truth, it is time he were gone. The humour of the thing, if there ever was much in it, was pretty well exhausted; and a two years' and a half existence has been a tolerable duration for a phantom.

I am now at liberty to confess, that much which I have heard objected to my late friend's writings was well-founded. Crude they are, I grant you—a sort of unlicked, incondite things—villainously pranked in an affected array of antique modes and phrases. They had not been *his*, if they had been other than such; and better it is, that a writer should be natural in a self-pleasing quaintness, than to affect a naturalness (so called) that should be strange to him. Egotistical they have been pronounced by some who did not know, that what he tells us, as of himself, was often true only (historically) of another; as in a former Essay (to save many instances)—where under the *first person* (his favourite figure) he shadows forth the forlorn estate of a country-boy placed at a London school, far from his friends and connections—in direct opposition to his own early history. If it be egotism to imply and twine with his own identity the griefs and affections of another—making himself many, or reducing many unto himself—then is the

skilful novelist, who all along brings in his hero or heroine, speaking of themselves, the greatest egotist of all; who yet has never, therefore, been accused of that narrowness. And how shall the intenser dramatist escape being faulty, who, doubtless, under cover of passion uttered by another, oftentimes gives blameless vent to his most inward feelings, and expresses his own story modestly.

My late friend was in many respects a singular character. Those who did not like him, hated him; and some, who once liked him, afterwards became his bitterest haters. The truth is, he gave himself too little concern what he uttered, and in whose presence. He observed neither time nor place, and would e'en out with what came uppermost. With the severe religionist he would pass for a free-thinker; while the other faction set him down for a bigot, or persuaded themselves that he belied his sentiments. Few understood him; and I am not certain that at all times he quite understood himself. He too much affected that dangerous figure—irony. He sowed doubtful speeches, and reaped plain, unequivocal hatred. —He would interrupt the gravest discussion with some light jest; and yet, perhaps, not quite irrelevant in ears that could understand it. Your long and much talkers hated him. The informal habit of his mind, joined to an inveterate impediment of speech, forbade him to be an orator; and he seemed determined that no one else should play that part when he was present. He was *petit* and ordinary in his person and appearance. I have seen him sometimes in what is called good company, but where he has been a stranger, sit silent, and be suspected for an odd fellow; till some unlucky occasion provoking it, he would stutter out some senseless pun (not altogether senseless perhaps, if rightly taken), which has stamped his character for the evening. It was hit or miss

with him; but nine times out of ten, he contrived by this device to send away a whole company his enemies. His conceptions rose kindlier than his utterance, and his happiest *impromptus* had the appearance of effort. He has been accused of trying to be witty, when in truth he was but struggling to give his poor thoughts articulation. He chose his companions for some individuality of character which they manifested.—Hence, not many persons of science, and few professed *literati*, were of his councils. They were, for the most part, persons of an uncertain fortune; and, as to such people commonly nothing is more obnoxious than a gentleman of settled (though moderate) income, he passed with most of them for a great miser. To my knowledge this was a mistake. His *intimados*, to confess a truth, were in the world's eye a ragged regiment. He found them floating on the surface of society; and the colour, or something else, in the weed pleased him. The burrs stuck to him—but they were good and loving burrs for all that. He never greatly cared for the society of what are called good people. If any of these were scandalised (and offences were sure to arise), he could not help it. When he has been remonstrated with for not making more concessions to the feelings of good people, he would retort by asking, what one point did these good people ever concede to him? He was temperate in his meals and diversions, but always kept a little on this side of abstemiousness. Only in the use of the Indian weed he might be thought a little excessive. He took it, he would say, as a solvent of speech. Marry—as the friendly vapour ascended, how his prattle would curl up sometimes with it! the ligaments which tongue-tied him, were loosened, and the stammerer proceeded a statist!

I do not know whether I ought to bemoan or rejoice that my old friend is departed. His jests were

beginning to grow obsolete, and his stories to be found out. He felt the approaches of age; and while he pretended to cling to life, you saw how slender were the ties left to bind him. Discoursing with him latterly on this subject, he expressed himself with a pettishness, which I thought unworthy of him. In our walks about his suburban retreat (as he called it) at Shacklewell, some children belonging to a school of industry had met us, and bowed and curtseyed, as he thought, in an especial manner to *him*. "They take me for a visiting governor," he muttered earnestly. He had a horror, which he carried to a foible, of looking like anything important and parochial. He thought that he approached nearer to that stamp daily. He had a general aversion from being treated like a grave or respectable character, and kept a wary eye upon the advances of age that should so entitle him. He herded always, while it was possible, with people younger than himself. He did not conform to the march of time, but was dragged along in the procession. His manners lagged behind his years. He was too much of the boy-man. The *toga virilis* never sate gracefully on his shoulders. The impressions of infancy had burnt into him, and he resented the impertinence of manhood. These were weaknesses; but such as they were, they are a key to explicate some of his writings.



BLAKESMOOR IN H—SHIRE

I DO not know a pleasure more affecting than to range at will over the deserted apartments of some fine old family mansion. The traces of extinct grandeur admit of a better passion than envy; and contemplations on the great and good, whom we fancy in succession to have been its inhabitants, weave for us illusions, incompatible with the bustle of modern occupancy, and vanities of foolish present aristocracy. The same difference of feeling, I think, attends us between entering an empty and a crowded church. In the latter it is chance but some present human frailty—an act of inattention on the part of some of the auditory—or a trait of affectation, or worse, vain-glory, on that of the preacher—puts us by our best thoughts, disharmonising the place and the occasion. But wouldst thou know the beauty of holiness?—go alone on some week-day, borrowing the keys of good Master Sexton, traverse the cool aisles of some country church: think of the piety that has kneeled there—the congregations, old and young, that have found consolation there—the meek

pastor—the docile parishioner. With no disturbing emotions, no cross conflicting comparisons, drink in the tranquillity of the place, till thou thyself become as fixed and motionless as the marble effigies that kneel and weep around thee.

Journeying northward lately, I could not resist going some few miles out of my road to look upon the remains of an old great house with which I had been impressed in this way in infancy. I was apprised that the owner of it had lately pulled it down; still I had a vague notion that it could not all have perished, that so much solidity with magnificence could not have been crushed all at once into the mere dust and rubbish which I found it.

The work of ruin had proceeded with a swift hand indeed, and the demolition of a few weeks had reduced it to—an antiquity.

I was astonished at the indistinction of everything. Where had stood the great gates? What bounded the court-yard? Whereabout did the out-houses commence? a few bricks only lay as representatives of that which was so stately and so spacious.

Death does not shrink up his human victim at this rate. The burnt ashes of a man weigh more in their proportion.

Had I seen those brick-and-mortar knaves at their process of destruction, at the plucking of every pannel I should have felt the varlets at my heart. I should have cried out to them to spare a plank at least out of the cheerful store-room, in whose hot window-seat I used to sit and read Cowley, with the grass-plat before, and the hum and flappings of that one solitary wasp that ever haunted it about me—it is in mine ears now, as oft as summer returns; or a pannel of the yellow room.

Why, every plank and pannel of that house for me had magic in it. The tapestried bed-rooms—tapestry

so much better than painting—not adorning merely, but peopling the wainscots—at which childhood ever and anon would steal a look, shifting its coverlid (replaced as quickly) to exercise its tender courage in a momentary eye-encounter with those stern bright visages, staring reciprocally—all Ovid on the walls, in colours vivider than his descriptions. Actæon in mid sprout, with the unappeasable prudery of Diana; and the still more provoking, and almost culinary coolness of Dan Phœbus, eel-fashion, deliberately divesting of Marsyas.

Then, that haunted room—in which old Mrs Battle died—whereinto I have crept, but always in the day time, with a passion of fear; and a sneaking curiosity, terror-tainted, to hold communication with the past.—*How shall they build it up again?*

It was an old deserted place, yet not so long deserted but that traces of the splendour of past inmates were everywhere apparent. Its furniture was still standing —even to the tarnished gilt feather battledores, and crumbling feathers of shuttlecocks in the nursery, which told that children had once played there. But I was a lonely child, and had the range at will of every apartment, knew every nook and corner, wondered and worshipped everywhere.

The solitude of childhood is not so much the mother of thought, as it is the feeder of love, and silence, and admiration. So strange a passion for the place possessed me in those years, that, though there lay—I shame to say how few roods distant from the mansion —half hid by trees, what I judged some romantic lake, such was the spell which bound me to the house, and such my carefulness not to pass its strict and proper precincts, that the idle waters lay unexplored for me; and not till late in life, curiosity prevailing over elder devotion, I found, to my astonishment, a pretty brawling brook had been the Lacus Incognitus

of my infancy. Variegated views, extensive prospects —and those at no great distance from the house—I was told of such—what were they to me, being out of the boundaries of my Eden ?—So far from a wish to roam, I would have drawn, methought, still closer the fences of my chosen prison ; and have been hemmed in by a yet securer cincture of those excluding garden walls. I could have exclaimed with that garden-loving poet—

> Bind me, ye woodbines, in your twines ;
> Curl me about, ye gadding vines ;
> And oh so close your circles lace,
> That I may never leave this place ;
> But, lest your fetters prove too weak,
> Ere I your silken bondage break,
> Do you, O brambles, chain me too,
> And, courteous briars, nail me through.

I was here as in a lonely temple. Snug firesides—the low-built roof—parlours ten feet by ten—frugal boards, and all the homeliness of home—these were the condition of my birth—the wholesome soil which I was planted in. Yet, without impeachment to their tenderest lessons, I am not sorry to have had glances of something beyond ; and to have taken, if but a peep, in childhood, at the contrasting accidents of a great fortune.

To have the feeling of gentility, it is not necessary to have been born gentle. The pride of ancestry may be had on cheaper terms than to be obliged to an importunate race of ancestors ; and the coatless antiquary in his unemblazoned cell, revolving the long line of a Mowbray's or De Clifford's pedigree, at those sounding names may warm himself into as gay a vanity as those who do inherit them. The claims of birth are ideal merely, and what herald shall go about to strip me of an idea ? Is it trenchant to their swords ? can it be hacked off as a spur can ? or torn away like a tarnished garter ?

What, else, were the families of the great to us? what pleasure should we take in their tedious genealogies, or their capitulatory brass monuments? What to us the uninterrupted current of their bloods, if our own did not answer within us to a cognate and correspondent elevation?

Or wherefore else, O tattered and diminished 'Scutcheon that hung upon the time-worn walls of thy princely stairs, BLAKESMOOR! have I in childhood so oft stood poring upon thy mystic characters—thy emblematic supporters, with their prophetic "Resurgam"—till, every dreg of peasantry purging off, I received into myself Very Gentility? Thou wert first in my morning eyes; and of nights, hast detained my steps from bedward, till it was but a step from gazing at thee to dreaming on thee.

This is the only true gentry by adoption; the veritable change of blood, and not, as empirics have fabled, by transfusion.

Who it was by dying that had earned the splendid trophy, I know not, I inquired not; but its fading rags, and colours cobweb-stained, told that its subject was of two centuries back.

And what if my ancestor at that date was some Damœtas—feeding flocks, not his own, upon the hills of Lincoln—did I in less earnest vindicate to myself the family trappings of this once proud Ægon? —repaying by a backward triumph the insults he might possibly have heaped in his lifetime upon my poor pastoral progenitor.

If it were presumption so to speculate, the present owners of the mansion had least reason to complain. They had long forsaken the old house of their fathers for a newer trifle; and I was left to appropriate to myself what images I could pick up, to raise my fancy, or to soothe my vanity.

I was the true descendant of those old W——s;

and not the present family of that name, who had fled the old waste places.

Mine was that gallery of good old family portraits, which as I have gone over, giving them in fancy my own family name, one—and then another—would seem to smile—reaching forward from the canvas, to recognise the new relationship; while the rest looked grave, as it seemed, at the vacancy in their dwelling, and thoughts of fled posterity.

That Beauty with the cool blue pastoral drapery, and a lamb—that hung next the great bay window—with the bright yellow H——shire hair, and eye of watchet hue—so like my Alice!—I am persuaded she was a true Elia—Mildred Elia, I take it.

Mine too, BLAKESMOOR, was thy noble Marble Hall, with its mosaic pavements, and its Twelve Cæsars—stately busts in marble—ranged round: of whose countenances, young reader of faces as I was, the frowning beauty of Nero, I remember, had most of my wonder; but the mild Galba had my love. There they stood in the coldness of death, yet freshness of immortality.

Mine too, thy lofty Justice Hall, with its one chair of authority, high-backed and wickered, once the terror of luckless poacher, or self-forgetful maiden—so common since, that bats have roosted in it.

Mine too—whose else?—thy costly fruit-garden, with its sun-baked southern wall; the ampler pleasure-garden, rising backwards from the house in triple terraces, with flower-pots now of palest lead, save that a speck here and there, saved from the elements, bespake their pristine state to have been gilt and glittering; the verdant quarters backwarder still; and, stretching still beyond, in old formality, thy firry wilderness, the haunt of the squirrel, and the day-long murmuring wood-pigeon, with that antique image in the centre, God or Goddess I wist not; but



e way that gallery of good old family portraits."



"The terror of luckless poacher"

Athens or old Rome paid never a sincerer
to Pan or to Sylvanus in their native groves,
› that fragmental mystery.
t for this, that I kissed my childish hands too
in your idol worship, walks and windings of
ıoor! for this, or what sin of mine, has the
assed over your pleasant places? I sometimes
ıt as men, when they die, do not die all, so
extinguished habitations there may be a hope
ı to be revivified.



POOR RELATIONS

A POOR Relation—is the most irrelevant thing in nature,—a piece of impertinent correspondency,—an odious approximation,—a haunting conscience,—a preposterous shadow, lengthening in the noontide of your prosperity,—an unwelcome remembrancer,—a perpetually recurring mortification,—a drain on your purse,—a more intolerable dun upon your pride,—a drawback upon success,—a rebuke to your rising,—a stain in your blood,—a blot on your 'scutcheon,—a rent in your garment,—a death's head at your banquet,—Agathocles' pot,—a Mordecai in your gate,—a Lazarus at your door,—a lion in your path,—a frog in your chamber,—a fly in your ointment,—a mote in your eye,—a triumph to your enemy, an apology to your friends,—the one thing not needful,—the hail in harvest,—the ounce of sour in a pound of sweet.

He is known by his knock. Your heart telleth you "That is Mr ——." A rap, between familiarity and respect; that demands, and, at the same time,



"He casually looketh in about dinner-time."

seems to despair of, entertainment. He entereth smiling and—embarrassed. He holdeth out his hand to you to shake, and—draweth it back again. He casually looketh in about dinner-time—when the table is full. He offereth to go away, seeing you have company, but is induced to stay. He filleth a chair, and your visitor's two children are accommodated at a side table. He never cometh upon open days, when your wife says with some complacency, "My dear, perhaps Mr —— will drop in to-day." He remembereth birth-days—and professeth he is fortunate to have stumbled upon one. He declareth against fish, the turbot being small—yet suffereth himself to be importuned into a slice against his first resolution. He sticketh by the port—yet will be prevailed upon to empty the remainder glass of claret, if a stranger press it upon him. He is a puzzle to the servants, who are fearful of being too obsequious, or not civil enough, to him. The guests think "they have seen him before." Every one speculateth upon his condition; and the most part take him to be—a tide waiter. He calleth you by your Christian name, to imply that his other is the same with your own. He is too familiar by half, yet you wish he had less diffidence. With half the familiarity he might pass for a casual dependent; with more boldness he would be in no danger of being taken for what he is. He is too humble for a friend, yet taketh on him more state than befits a client. He is a worse guest than a country tenant, inasmuch as he bringeth up no rent—yet 'tis odds, from his garb and demeanour, that your guests take him for one. He is asked to make one at the whist table; refuseth on the score of poverty, and—resents being left out. When the company break up, he proffereth to go for a coach—and lets the servant go. He recollects your grandfather; and will thrust in some mean and quite

unimportant anecdote of—the family. He knew it when it was not quite so flourishing as "he is blest in seeing it now." He reviveth past situations to institute what he calleth—favourable comparisons. With a reflecting sort of congratulation, he will inquire the price of your furniture: and insults you with a special commendation of your window-curtains. He is of opinion that the urn is the more elegant shape, but, after all, there was something more comfortable about the old tea-kettle—which you must remember. He dare say you must find a great convenience in having a carriage of your own, and appealeth to your lady if it is not so. Inquireth if you have had your arms done on vellum yet; and did not know, till lately, that such-an-such had been the crest of the family. His memory is unseasonable; his compliments perverse; his talk a trouble; his stay pertinacious; and when he goeth away, you dismiss his chair into a corner, as precipitately as possible, and feel fairly rid of two nuisances.

There is a worse evil under the sun, and that is—a female Poor Relation. You may do something with the other; you may pass him off tolerably well; but your indigent she-relative is hopeless. "He is an old humourist," you may say, "and affects to go threadbare. His circumstances are better than folks would take them to be. You are fond of having a Character at your table, and truly he is one." But in the indications of female poverty there can be no disguise. No woman dresses below herself from caprice. The truth must out without shuffling. "She is plainly related to the L——s; or what does she at their house?" She is, in all probability, your wife's cousin. Nine times out of ten, at least, this is the case. Her garb is something between a gentlewoman and a beggar, yet the former evidently predominates. She is most provokingly humble, and



"She begs to be helped—after the gentlemen."

ostentatiously sensible to her inferiority. He may require to be repressed sometimes—*aliquando sufflaminandus erat*—but there is no raising her. You send her soup at dinner, and she begs to be helped—after the gentlemen. Mr —— requests the honour of taking wine with her; she hesitates between Port and Madeira, and chooses the former—because he does. She calls the servant *Sir*; and insists on not troubling him to hold her plate. The housekeeper patronizes her. The children's governess takes upon her to correct her, when she has mistaken the piano for harpsichord.

Richard Amlet, Esq., in the play, is a noticeable instance of the disadvantages, to which this chimerical

notion of *affinity constituting a claim to an acquaintance*, may subject the spirit of a gentleman. A little foolish blood is all that is betwixt him and a lady with a great estate. His stars are perpetually crossed by the malignant maternity of an old woman, who persists in calling him "her son Dick." But she has wherewithal in the end to recompense his indignities, and float him again upon the brilliant surface, under which it had been her seeming business and pleasure all along to sink him. All men, besides, are not of Dick's temperament. I knew an Amlet in real life, who wanting Dick's buoyancy, sank indeed. Poor W—— was of my own standing at Christ's, a fine classic, and a youth of promise. If he had a blemish, it was too much pride; but its quality was inoffensive; it was not of that sort which hardens the heart, and serves to keep inferiors at a distance; it only sought to ward off derogation from itself. It was the principle of self-respect carried as far as it could go, without infringing upon that respect, which he would have every one else equally maintain for himself. He would have you to think alike with him on this topic. Many a quarrel have I had with him, when we were rather older boys, and our tallness made us more obnoxious to observation in the blue clothes, because I would not thread the alleys and blind ways of the town with him to elude notice, when we have been out together on a holiday in the streets of this sneering and prying metropolis. W—— went, sore with these notions, to Oxford, where the dignity and sweetness of a scholar's life, meeting with the alloy of a humble introduction, wrought in him a passionate devotion to the place, with a profound aversion from the society. The servitor's gown (worse than his school array) clung to him with Nessian venom. He thought himself ridiculous in a garb, under which Latimer must have walked erect; and in which

Hooker, in his young days, possibly flaunted in a vein of no discommendable vanity. In the depth of college shades, or in his lonely chamber, the poor student shrunk from observation. He found shelter among books, which insult not; and studies, that ask no questions of a youth's finances. He was lord of his library, and seldom cared for looking out beyond his domains. The healing influence of studious pursuits was upon him, to soothe and to abstract. He was almost a healthy man; when the waywardness of his fate broke out against him with a second and worse malignity. The father of W—— had hitherto exercised the humble profession of house-painter at N——, near Oxford. A supposed interest with some of the heads of colleges had now induced him to take up his abode in that city, with the hope of being employed upon some public works which were talked of. From that moment I read in the countenance of the young man, the determination which at length tore him from academical pursuits for ever. To a person unacquainted with our Universities, the distance between the gownsmen and the townsmen, as they are called—the trading part of the latter especially—is carried to an excess that would appear harsh and incredible. The temperament of W——'s father was diametrically the reverse of his own. Old W—— was a little, busy, cringing tradesman, who, with his son upon his arm, would stand bowing and scraping, cap in hand, to anything that wore the semblance of a gown—insensible to the winks and opener remonstrances of the young man, to whose chamber-fellow, or equal in standing, perhaps, he was thus obsequiously and gratuitously ducking. Such a state of things could not last. W—— must change the air of Oxford or be suffocated. He chose the former; and let the sturdy moralist, who strains the point of the filial duties as high as they can bear, censure the

dereliction; he cannot estimate the struggle. I stood with W——, the last afternoon I ever saw him, under the eaves of his paternal dwelling. It was in the fine lane leading from the High Street to the back of **** college, where W—— kept his rooms. He seemed thoughtful, and more reconciled. I ventured to rally him—finding him in a better mood—upon a representation of the Artist Evangelist, which the old man, whose affairs were beginning to flourish, had caused to be set up in a splendid sort of frame over his really handsome shop, either as a token of prosperity, or badge of gratitude to his saint. W—— looked up at the Luke, and, like Satan, "knew his mounted sign—and fled." A letter on his father's table the next morning, announced that he had accepted a commission in a regiment about to embark for Portugal. He was among the first who perished before the walls of St. Sebastian.

I do not know how, upon a subject which I began with treating half seriously, I should have fallen upon a recital so eminently painful; but this theme of poor relationship is replete with so much matter for tragic as well as comic associations, that it is difficult to keep the account distinct without blending. The earliest impressions which I received on this matter, are certainly not attended with anything painful, or very humiliating, in the recalling. At my father's table (no very splendid one) was to be found, every Saturday, the mysterious figure of an aged gentleman, clothed in neat black, of a sad yet comely appearance. His deportment was of the essence of gravity; his words few or none; and I was not to make a noise in his presence. I had little inclination to have done so—for my cue was to admire in silence. A particular elbow chair was appropriated to him, which was in no case to be violated. A peculiar sort of sweet pudding, which appeared on no other occasion,

distinguished the days of his coming. I used to think him a prodigiously rich man. All I could make out of him was, that he and my father had been schoolfellows a world ago at Lincoln, and that he came from the Mint. The Mint I knew to be a place where all the money was coined—and I thought he was the owner of all that money. Awful ideas of the Tower twined themselves about his presence. He seemed above human infirmities and passions. A sort of melancholy grandeur invested him. From some inexplicable doom I fancied him obliged to go about in an eternal suit of mourning; captive—a stately being, let out of the Tower on Saturdays. Often have I wondered at the temerity of my father, who, in spite of an habitual general respect which we all in common manifested towards him, would venture now and then to stand up against him in some argument, touching their youthful days. The houses of the ancient city of Lincoln are divided (as most of my readers know) between the dwellers on the hill, and in the valley. This marked distinction formed an obvious division between the boys who lived above (however brought together in a common school) and the boys whose paternal residence was on the plain; a sufficient cause of hostility in the code of these young Grotiuses. My father had been a leading Mountaineer; and would still maintain the general superiority, in skill and hardihood, of the *Above Boys* (his own faction) over the *Below Boys* (so were they called), of which party his contemporary had been a chieftain. Many and hot were the skirmishes on this topic—the only one upon which the old gentleman was ever brought out—and bad blood bred; even sometimes almost to the recommencement (so I expected) of actual hostilities. But my father, who scorned to insist upon advantages, generally contrived to turn the conversation upon some adroit by-com-

mendation of the old Minster; in the general preference of which, before all other cathedrals in the island, the dweller on the hill, and the plain-born, could meet on a conciliating level, and lay down their less important differences. Once only I saw the old gentleman really ruffled, and I remembered with anguish the thought that came over me: "Perhaps he will never come here again." He had been pressed to take another plate of the viand, which I have already mentioned as the indispensable concomitant of his visits. He had refused with a resistance amounting to rigour—when my aunt, an old Lincolnian, but who had something of this in common with my cousin Bridget, that she would sometimes press civility out of season—uttered the following memorable application—"Do take another slice, Mr Billet, for you do not get pudding every day." The old gentleman said nothing at the time—but he took occasion in the course of the evening, when some argument had intervened between them, to utter with an emphasis which chilled the company, and which chills me now as I write it—"Woman, you are superannuated." John Billet did not survive long, after the digesting of this affront; but he survived long enough to assure me that peace was actually restored! and, if I remember aright, another pudding was discreetly substituted in the place of that which had occasioned the offence. He died at the Mint (anno 1781) where he had long held, what he accounted, a comfortable independence; and with five pounds, fourteen shillings, and a penny, which were found in his escrutoire after his decease, left the world, blessing God that he had enough to bury him, and that he had never been obliged to any man for a sixpence. This was—a Poor Relation.



STAGE ILLUSION

A PLAY is said to be well or ill acted in proportion to the scenical illusion produced. Whether such illusion can in any case be perfect, is not the question. The nearest approach to it, we are told, is, when the actor appears wholly unconscious of the presence of spectators. In tragedy—in all which is to affect the feelings—this undivided attention to his stage business seems indispensable. Yet it is, in fact, dispensed with every day by our cleverest tragedians; and while these references to an audience, in the shape of rant or sentiment, are not too frequent or palpable, a sufficient quantity of illusion for the purposes of dramatic interest may be said to be produced in spite of them. But, tragedy apart, it may be inquired whether, in certain characters in comedy, especially those which are a little

extravagant, or which involve some notion repugnant to the moral sense, it is not a proof of the highest skill in the comedian when, without absolutely appealing to an audience, he keeps up a tacit understanding with them; and makes them, unconsciously to themselves, a party in the scene. The utmost nicety is required in the mood of doing this; but we speak only of the great artists in the profession.

The most mortifying infirmity in human nature, to feel in ourselves, or to contemplate in another, is, perhaps, cowardice. To see a coward *done to the life* upon a stage would produce anything but mirth. Yet we most of us remember Jack Bannister's cowards. Could anything be more agreeable, more pleasant? We loved the rogues. How was this effected but by the exquisite art of the actor in a perpetual sub-insinuation to us, the spectators, even in the extremity of the shaking fit, that he was not half such a coward as we took him for? We saw all the common symptoms of the malady upon him; the quivering lip, the cowering knees, the teeth chattering; and could have sworn "that man was frightened." But we forgot all the while—or kept it almost a secret to ourselves—that he never once lost his self-possession; that he let out by a thousand droll looks and gestures—meant to *us*, and not at all supposed to be visible to his fellows in the scene, that his confidence in his own resources had never once deserted him. Was this a genuine picture of a coward? or not rather a likeness, which the clever artist contrived to palm upon us instead of an original; while we secretly connived at the delusion for the purpose of greater pleasure, than a more genuine counterfeiting of the imbecility, helplessness, and utter self-desertion, which we know to be concomitants of cowardice in real life, could have given us?

Why are misers so hateful in the world, and so endurable on the stage, but because the skilful actor, by a sort of sub-reference, rather than direct appeal to us, disarms the character of a great deal of its odiousness, by seeming to engage *our* compassion for the insecure tenure by which he holds his money-bags and parchments? By this subtle vent half of the hatefulness of the character—the self-closeness with which in real life it coils itself up from the sympathies of men—evaporates. The miser becomes sympathetic; *i.e.* is no genuine miser. Here again a diverting likeness is substituted for a very disagreeable reality?

Spleen, irritability—the pitiable infirmities of old men, which produce only pain to behold in the realities, counterfeited upon a stage, divert not altogether for the comic appendages to them, but in part from an inner conviction that they are *being acted* before us; that a likeness only is going on, and not the thing itself. They please by being done under the life, or beside it; not *to the life*. When Gatty acts an old man, is he angry indeed? or only a pleasant counterfeit, just enough of a likeness to recognise, without pressing upon us the uneasy sense of a reality.

Comedians, paradoxical as it may seem, may be too natural. It was the case with a late actor. Nothing could be more earnest or true than the manner of Mr Emery; this told excellently in his Tyke, and characters of a tragic cast. But when he carried the same rigid exclusiveness of attention to the stage business, and wilful blindness and oblivion of everything before the curtain into his comedy, it produced a harsh and dissonant effect. He was out of keeping with the rest of the *Personæ Dramatis*. There was as little link between him and them as betwixt himself and the audience. He was a third



"The pitiable infirmities of old men."

estate, dry, repulsive, and unsocial to all. Individually considered, his execution was masterly. But comedy is not this unbending thing; for this reason, that the same degree of credibility is not required of it as to serious scenes. The degrees of credibility demanded to the two things may be illustrated by the different sort of truth which we expect when a man tells us a mournful or a merry story. If we suspect the former of falsehood in any one tittle, we reject it altogether.

Our tears refuse to flow at a suspected imposition. But the teller of a mirthful tale has latitude allowed him. We are content with less than absolute truth. 'Tis the same with dramatic illusion. We confess we love in comedy to see an audience naturalised behind the scenes, taken in into the interest of the drama, welcomed as by-standers however. There is something ungracious in a comic actor holding himself aloof from all participation or concern with those who are come to be diverted by him. Macbeth must see the dagger, and no ear but his own be told of it; but an old fool in farce may think he *sees something*, and by conscious words and looks express it, as plainly as he can speak, to pit, box, and gallery. When an impertinent in tragedy, an Osric, for instance, breaks in upon the serious passions of the scene, we approve of the contempt with which he is treated. But when the pleasant impertinent of comedy, in a piece purely meant to give delight, and raise mirth out of whimsical perplexities, worries the studious man with taking up his leisure, or making his house his home, the same sort of contempt expressed (however *natural*) would destroy the balance of delight in the spectators. To make the intrusion comic, the actor who plays the annoyed man must a little desert nature; he must, in short, be thinking of the audience, and express only so much dissatisfaction and peevishness as is consistent with the pleasure of comedy. In other words, his perplexity must seem half put on. If he repel the intruder with the sober set face of a man in earnest, and more especially if he deliver his expostulations in a tone which in the world must necessarily provoke a duel; his real-life manner will destroy the whimsical and purely dramatic existence of the other character (which to render it comic demands an antagonist comicality on the part of the character opposed to it), and convert what was meant

for mirth, rather than belief, into a downright piece of impertinence indeed, which would raise no diversion in us, but rather stir pain, to see inflicted in earnest upon any unworthy person. A very judicious actor (in most of his parts) seems to have fallen into an error of this sort in his playing with Mr Wrench in the farce of Free and Easy.

Many instances would be tedious; these may suffice to show that comic acting at least does not always demand from the performer that strict abstraction from all reference to an audience which is exacted of it; but that in some cases a sort of compromise may take place, and all the purposes of dramatic delight be attained by a judicious understanding, not too openly announced, between the ladies and gentlemen—on both sides of the curtain.





TO THE SHADE OF ELLISTON

JOYOUSEST of once embodied spirits, whither at length hast thou flown? To what genial region are we permitted to conjecture that thou hast flitted?

Art thou sowing thy WILD OATS yet (the harvest time was still to come with thee) upon casual sands of Avernus? or art thou enacting ROVER (as we would gladlier think) by wandering Elysian streams?

This mortal frame, while thou didst play thy brief antics amongst us, was in truth any thing but a prison to thee, as the vain Platonist dreams of this *body* to be no better than a county gaol, forsooth, or some house of durance vile, whereof the five senses are the fetters. Thou knewest better than to be in a hurry to cast off those gyves; and had notice to quit, I fear, before thou wert quite ready to abandon this fleshy tenement. It was thy Pleasure-

House, thy Palace of Dainty Devices: thy Louvre, or thy White-Hall.

What new mysterious lodgings dost thou tenant now? or when may we expect thy aërial housewarming?

Tartarus we know, and we have read of the Blessed Shades; now cannot I intelligibly fancy thee in either?

Is it too much to hazard a conjecture, that (as the schoolmen admitted a receptacle apart for Patriarchs and un-chrisom Babes) there may exist—not far perchance from that storehouse of all vanities, which Milton saw in visions—a LIMBO somewhere for PLAYERS? and that

> Up thither like aërial vapours fly
> Both all Stage things, and all that in Stage things
> Built their fond hopes of glory, or lasting fame?
> All the unaccomplish'd works of Authors' hands,
> Abortive, monstrous, or unkindly mix'd,
> Damn'd upon earth, fleet thither—
> Play, Opera, Farce, with all their trumpery.—

There, by the neighbouring moon (by some not improperly supposed thy Regent Planet upon earth) mayst thou not still be acting thy managerial pranks, great disembodied Lessee? but Lessee still, and still a Manager.

In Green Rooms, impervious to mortal eye, the muse beholds thee wielding posthumous empire.

Thin ghosts of Figurantes (never plump on earth) circle thee in endlessly, and still their song is *Fie on sinful Phantasy.*

Magnificent were thy capriccios on this globe of earth, ROBERT WILLIAM ELLISTON! for as yet we know not thy new name in heaven.

It irks me to think, that, stript of thy regalities, thou shouldst ferry over, a poor forked shade, in crazy Stygian wherry. Methinks I hear the old

boatman, paddling by the weedy wharf, with raucid voice, bawling "SCULLS, SCULLS:" to which, with waving hand, and majestic action, thou deignest no reply, other than in two curt monosyllables, "No: OARS."

But the laws of Pluto's kingdom know small difference between king, and cobbler; manager, and call-boy; and, if haply your dates of life were conterminant, you are quietly taking your passage, cheek by cheek (O ignoble levelling of Death), with the shade of some recently departed candle-snuffer.

But mercy! what strippings, what tearing off of histrionic robes, and private vanities! what denudations to the bone, before the surly Ferryman will admit you to set a foot within his battered lighter.

Crowns, sceptres; shield, sword, and truncheon; thy own coronation robes (for thou hast brought the whole property man's wardrobe with thee, enough to sink a navy); the judge's ermine; the coxcomb's wig; the snuff-box *à la Foppington*—all must overboard, he positively swears—and that ancient mariner brooks no denial; for, since the tiresome monodrame of the old Thracian Harper, Charon, it is to be believed, hath shown small taste for theatricals.

Aye, now 'tis done. You are just boat weight; *pura et puta anima*.

But bless me, how *little* you look!

So shall we all look—kings and keysars—stript for the last voyage.

But the murky rogue pushes off. Adieu, pleasant, and thrice pleasant shade! with my parting thanks for many a heavy hour of life lightened by thy harmless extravaganzas, public or domestic.

Rhadamanthus, who tries the lighter causes below, leaving to his two brethren the heavy calendars—honest Rhadamanth, always partial to players, weigh-

ing their parti-coloured existence here upon earth,—making account of the few foibles, that may have shaded thy *real life*, as we call it (though, substantially, scarcely less a vapour than thy idlest vagaries upon the boards of Drury), as but of so many echoes, natural re-percussions, and results to be expected from the assumed extravagancies of thy *secondary* or *mock life*, nightly upon a stage—after a lenient castigation, with rods lighter than of those Medusean ringlets, but just enough to "whip the offending Adam out of thee," shall courteously dismiss thee at the right hand gate—the O. P. side of Hades—that conducts to masques, and merry-makings, in the Theatre Royal of Proserpine.

PLAUDITO, ET VALETO.





ELLISTONIANA

MY acquaintance with the pleasant creature, whose loss we all deplore, was but slight.

My first introduction to E., which afterwards ripened into an acquaintance a little on this side of intimacy, was over a counter of the Leamington Spa Library, then newly entered upon by a branch of his family. E., whom nothing misbecame—to auspicate, I suppose, the filial concern, and set it a-going with a lustre—was serving in person two damsels fair, who had come into the shop ostensibly to inquire for some new publication, but in reality to have a sight of the illustrious shopman, hoping some conference. With what an air did he reach down the volume, dispassionately giving his opinion

upon the worth of the work in question, and launching out into a dissertation on its comparative merits with those of certain publications of a similar stamp, its rivals! his enchanted customers fairly hanging on his lips, subdued to their authoritative sentence. So have I seen a gentleman in comedy *acting* the shopman. So Lovelace sold his gloves in King Street. I admired the histrionic art, by which he contrived to carry clean away every notion of disgrace, from the occupation he had so generously submitted to; and from that hour I judged him, with no after repentance, to be a person, with whom it would be a felicity to be more acquainted.

To descant upon his merits as a Comedian would be superfluous. With his blended private and professional habits alone I have to do; that harmonious fusion of the manners of the player into those of every day life, which brought the stage boards into streets and dining-parlours, and kept up the play when the play was ended.—"I like Wrench," a friend was saying to him one day, "because he is the same natural, easy creature *on* the stage that he is *off*." "My case exactly," retorted Elliston—with a charming forgetfulness, that the converse of a proposition does not always lead to the same conclusion—"I am the same person *off* the stage that I am *on*." The inference, at first sight, seems identical; but examine it a little, and it confesses only that the one performer was never and the other always *acting*.

And in truth this was the charm of Elliston's private deportment. You had spirited performance always going on before your eyes, with nothing to pay. As where a monarch takes up his casual abode for a night, the poorest hovel which he honours by his sleeping in it, becomes *ipso facto* for that time a palace; so wherever Elliston walked, sate, or stood

still, there was the theatre. He carried about with him his pit, boxes, and galleries, and set up his portable playhouse at corners of streets, and in the market places. Upon flintiest pavements he trod the boards still; and if his theme chanced to be passionate, the green baise carpet of tragedy spontaneously rose beneath his feet. Now this was hearty and showed a love for his art. So Apelles *always* painted—in thought. So G. D. *always* poetises. I hate a lukewarm artist. I have known actors—and some of them of Elliston's own stamp—who shall have agreeably been amusing you in the part of a rake or a coxcomb, through the two or three hours of their dramatic existence; but no sooner does the curtain fall with its leaden clatter, but a spirit of lead seems to seize on all their faculties. They emerge sour, morose persons, intolerable to their families, servants, &c. Another shall have been expanding your heart with generous deeds and sentiments, till it even beats with yearnings of universal sympathy; you absolutely long to go home, and do some good action. The play seems tedious, till you can get fairly out of the house, and realise your laudable intentions. At length the final bell rings, and this cordial representative of all that is amiable in human breasts steps forth—a miser. Elliston was more of a piece. Did he *play* Ranger? and did Ranger fill the general bosom of the town with satisfaction? why should *he* not be Ranger, and diffuse the same cordial satisfaction among his private circles? with *his* temperament, *his* animal spirits, *his* good nature, *his* follies perchance, could he do better than identify himself with his impersonation? Are we to like a pleasant rake, or coxcomb, on the stage, and give ourselves airs of aversion for the identical character, presented to us in actual life? or what would the performer have gained by divesting himself of the impersonation? Could the man

Elliston have been essentially different from his part, even if he had avoided to reflect to us studiously, in private circles, the airy briskness, the forwardness, and 'scape-goat trickeries of his prototype?

"But there is something not natural in this everlasting *acting*; we want the real man."

Are you quite sure that it is not the man himself, whom you cannot, or will not see, under some adventitious trappings, which, nevertheless, sit not at all inconsistently upon him? What if it is the nature of some men to be highly artificial? The fault is least reprehensible in *players*. Cibber was his own Foppington, with almost as much wit as Vanbrugh could add to it.

"My conceit of his person,"—it is Ben Jonson speaking of Lord Bacon,—"was never increased towards him by his *place* or *honours*, but I have, and do reverence him for the *greatness*, that was only proper to himself; in that he seemed to me ever one of the *greatest* men, that had been in many ages. In his adversity I ever prayed that heaven would give him strength; for *greatness* he could not want."

The quality here commended was scarcely less conspicuous in the subject of these idle reminiscences than in my Lord Verulam. Those who have imagined that an unexpected elevation to the direction of a great London Theatre, affected the consequence of Elliston, or at all changed his nature, knew not the essential *greatness* of the man whom they disparage. It was my fortune to encounter him near St Dunstan's Church (which, with its punctual giants, is now no more than dust and a shadow), on the morning of his election to that high office. Grasping my hand with a look of significance, he only uttered,—"Have you heard the news?"—then with another look following up the blow, he subjoined, "I am the future manager of Drury

Lane Theatre."—Breathless as he saw me, he stayed not for congratulation or reply, but mutely stalked away, leaving me to chew upon his new-blown dignities at leisure. In fact, nothing could be said to it. Expressive silence alone could muse his praise. This was his *great* style.

But was he less *great* (be witness, O ye Powers of Equanimity, that supported in the ruins of Carthage the consular exile, and more recently transmuted for a more illustrious exile, the barren constableship of Elba into an image of Imperial France), when, in melancholy after-years, again, much near the same spot, I met him, when that sceptre had been wrested from his hand, and his dominion was curtailed to the petty managership, and part proprietorship, of the small Olympic, *his Elba?* He still played nightly upon the boards of Drury, but in parts alas! allotted to him, not magnificently distributed by him. Waiving his great loss as nothing, and magnificently sinking the sense of fallen *material* grandeur in the more liberal resentment of depreciations done to his more lofty *intellectual* pretensions. "Have you heard" (his customary exordium)—"have you heard," said he, "how they treat me? they put me in *comedy*." Thought I—but his finger on his lips forbade any verbal interruption—"where could they have put you better?" Then after a pause—"Where I formerly played Romeo, I now play Mercutio,"—and so again he stalked away, neither staying, nor caring for, responses.

O, it was a rich scene,—but Sir A—— C——, the best of story-tellers and surgeons, who mends a lame narrative almost as well as he sets a fracture, alone could do justice to it,—that I was a witness to, in the tarnished room (that had once been green) of that same little Olympic. There, after his deposition from Imperial Drury, he substituted a throne. That

Olympic Hill was his "highest heaven"; himself "Jove in his chair." There he sat in state, while before him, on complaint of prompter, was brought for judgment—how shall I describe her?—one of those little tawdry things that flirt at the tails of choruses—a probationer for the town, in either of its senses—the pertest little drab—a dirty fringe and appendage of the lamps' smoke—who, it seems, on some disapprobation expressed by a "highly respectable" audience,—had precipitately quitted her station on the boards, and withdrawn her small talents in disgust.

"And how dare you," said her manager,—assuming a censorial severity, which would have crushed the confidence of a Vestris, and disarmed that beautiful Rebel herself of her professional caprices—I verily believe, he thought *her* standing before him—"how dare you, Madam, withdraw yourself, without a notice, from your theatrical duties?" "I was hissed, Sir." "And you have the presumption to decide upon the taste of the town?" "I don't know that, Sir, but I will never stand to be hissed," was the subjoinder of young Confidence—when gathering up his features into one significant mass of wonder, pity, and expostulatory indignation—in a lesson never to have been lost upon a creature less forward than she who stood before him—his words were these: "They have hissed *me*."

'Twas the identical argument *à fortiori*, which the son of Peleus uses to Lycaon trembling under his lance, to persuade him to take his destiny with a good grace. "I too am mortal." And it is to be believed that in both cases the rhetoric missed of its application, for want of a proper understanding with the faculties of the respective recipients.

"Quite an Opera pit," he said to me, as he was courteously conducting me over the benches of his

Surrey Theatre, the last retreat, and recess, of his every-day waning grandeur.

Those who knew Elliston, will know the *manner* in which he pronounced the latter sentence of the few words I am about to record. One proud day to me he took his roast mutton with us in the Temple, to which I had superadded a preliminary haddock. After a rather plentiful partaking of the meagre banquet, not unrefreshed with the humbler sort of liquors, I made a sort of apology for the humility of the fare, observing that for my own part I never ate but one dish at dinner. "I too never eat but one thing at dinner,"—was his reply—then after a pause —"reckoning fish as nothing." The manner was all. It was as if by one peremptory sentence he had decreed the annihilation of all the savoury esculents, which the pleasant and nutritious food-giving Ocean pours forth upon poor humans from her watery bosom. This was *greatness*, tempered with considerate *tenderness* to the feelings of his scanty but welcoming entertainer.

Great wert thou in thy life, Robert William Elliston; and *not lessened* in thy death, if report speak truly, which says that thou didst direct that thy mortal remains should repose under no inscription but one of pure *Latinity*. Classical was thy bringing up! and beautiful was the feeling on thy last bed, which connecting the man with the boy, took thee back to thy latest exercise of imagination, to the days when, undreaming of Theatres and Managerships, thou wert a scholar, and an early ripe one, under the roofs builded by the munificent and pious Colet. For thee the Pauline Muses weep. In elegies, that shall silence this crude prose, they shall celebrate thy praise.



DETACHED THOUGHTS ON BOOKS AND READING

To mind the inside of a book is to entertain one's self with the forced product of another man's brain. Now I think a man of quality and breeding may be much amused with the natural sprouts of his own.

Lord Foppington in the Relapse.

AN ingenious acquaintance of my own was so much struck with this bright sally of his Lordship, that he has left off reading altogether, to the great improvement of his originality. At the hazard of losing some credit on this head, I must confess that I dedicate no inconsiderable portion of my time to other people's thoughts. I dream away my life in others' speculations. I love to lose myself in other men's minds. When I am not walking, I am reading; I cannot sit and think. Books think for me.

I have no repugnances. Shaftesbury is not too genteel for me, nor Jonathan Wild too low. I can read any thing which I call a *book*. There are things in that shape which I cannot allow for such.

In this catalogue of *books which are no books—biblia a-biblia*—I reckon Court Calendars, Directories, Pocket Books, Draught Boards, bound and lettered on the back, Scientific Treatises, Almanacks, Statutes at Large; the works of Hume, Gibbon, Robertson, Beattie, Soame Jenyns, and, generally, all those volumes which "no gentleman's library should be without:" the Histories of Flavius Josephus (that learned Jew), and Paley's Moral Philosophy. With these exceptions, I can read almost any thing. I bless my stars for a taste so catholic, so unexcluding.

I confess that it moves my spleen to see these *things in books' clothing* perched upon shelves, like false saints, usurpers of true shrines, intruders into the sanctuary, thrusting out the legitimate occupants. To reach down a well-bound semblance of a volume, and hope it some kind-hearted play-book, then, opening what "seem its leaves," to come bolt upon a withering Population Essay. To expect a Steele, or a Farquhar, and find—Adam Smith. To view a well-arranged assortment of block-headed Encyclopædias (Anglicanas or Metropolitanas) set out in an array of Russia, or Morocco, when a tithe of that good leather would comfortably re-clothe my shivering folios; would renovate Paracelsus himself, and enable old Raymund Lully to look like himself again in the world. I never see these impostors, but I long to strip them, to warm my ragged veterans in their spoils.

To be strong-backed and neat-bound is the desideratum of a volume. Magnificence comes after. This, when it can be afforded, is not to be lavished upon all kinds of books indiscriminately. I would

not dress a set of Magazines, for instance, in full suit. The dishabille, or half-binding (with Russia backs ever) is *our* costume. A Shakspeare, or a Milton (unless the first editions), it were mere foppery to trick out in gay apparel. The possession of them confers no distinction. The exterior of them (the things themselves being so common), strange to say, raises no sweet emotions, no tickling sense of property in the owner. Thomson's Seasons, again, looks best (I maintain it), a little torn, and dog's-eared. How beautiful to a genuine lover of reading are the sullied leaves, and worn out appearance, nay, the very odour (beyond Russia), if we would not forget kind feelings in fastidiousness, of an old "Circulating Library" Tom Jones, or Vicar of Wakefield! How they speak of the thousand thumbs, that have turned over their pages with delight!—of the lone sempstress, whom they may have cheered (milliner, or harder-working mantua-maker) after her long day's needle-toil, running far into midnight, when she has snatched an hour, ill-spared from sleep, to steep her cares, as in some Lethean cup, in spelling out their enchanting contents! Who would have them a whit less soiled? What better condition could we desire to see them in?

In some respects the better a book is, the less it demands from binding. Fielding, Smollett, Sterne, and all that class of perpetually self-reproductive volumes—Great Nature's Stereotypes—we see them individually perish with less regret, because we know the copies of them to be "eterne." But where a book is at once both good and rare—where the individual is almost the species, and when *that* perishes,

> We know not where is that Promethean torch
> That can its light relumine—

such a book, for instance, as the Life of the Duke of Newcastle, by his Duchess—no casket is rich enough,

no casing sufficiently durable, to honour and keep safe such a jewel.

Not only rare volumes of this description, which seem hopeless ever to be reprinted; but old editions of writers, such as Sir Philip Sydney, Bishop Taylor, Milton in his prose-works, Fuller—of whom we *have* reprints, yet the books themselves, though they go about, and are talked of here and there, we know, have not endenizened themselves (nor possibly ever will) in the national heart, so as to become stock books—it is good to possess these in durable and costly covers. I do not care for a First Folio of Shakspeare. I rather prefer the common editions of Rowe and Tonson, without notes, and with *plates*, which, being so execrably bad, serve as maps, or modest remembrancers, to the text; and without pretending to any supposable emulation with it, are so much better than the Shakspeare gallery *engravings*, which *did*. I have a community of feeling with my countrymen about his Plays, and I like those editions of him best which have been oftenest tumbled about and handled.—On the contrary, I cannot read Beaumont and Fletcher but in Folio. The Octavo editions are painful to look at. I have no sympathy with them. If they were as much read as the current editions of the other poet, I should prefer them in that shape to the older one. I do not know a more heartless sight than the reprint of the Anatomy of Melancholy. What need was there of unearthing the bones of that fantastic old great man, to expose them in a winding-sheet of the newest fashion to modern censure? what hapless stationer could dream of Burton ever becoming popular?—The wretched Malone could not do worse, when he bribed the sexton of Stratford church to let him white-wash the painted effigy of old Shakspeare, which stood there, in rude but lively fashion depicted, to the very colour of

the cheek, the eye, the eye-brow, hair, the very dress he used to wear—the only authentic testimony we had, however imperfect, of those curious parts and parcels of him. They covered him over with a coat of white paint. By ——, if I had been a justice of peace for Warwickshire, I would have clapt both commentator and sexton fast in the stocks, for a pair of meddling sacrilegious varlets.

I think I see them at their work—these sapient trouble-tombs.

Shall I be thought fantastical, if I confess, that the names of some of our poets sound sweeter, and have a finer relish to the ear—to mine, at least—than that of Milton or of Shakspeare? It may be, that the latter are more staled and rung upon in common discourse. The sweetest names, and which carry a perfume in the mention, are, Kit Marlowe, Drayton, Drummond of Hawthornden, and Cowley.

Much depends upon *when* and *where* you read a book. In the five or six impatient minutes, before the dinner is quite ready, who would think of taking up the Fairy Queen for a stop-gap, or a volume of Bishop Andrewes' sermons?

Milton almost requires a solemn service of music to be played before you enter upon him. But he brings his music, to which, who listens, had need bring docile thoughts and purged ears.

Winter evenings—the world shut out—with less of ceremony the gentle Shakspeare enters. At such a season, the Tempest, or his own Winter's Tale—

These two poets you cannot avoid reading aloud —to yourself, or (as it chances) to some single person listening. More than one—and it degenerates into an audience.

Books of quick interest, that hurry on for incidents, are for the eye to glide over only. It will not do to read them out. I could never listen to even the



'A fellow will get up and spell out a paragraph

better kind of modern novels without extreme irksomeness.

A newspaper, read out, is intolerable. In some of the Bank offices it is the custom (to save so much individual time) for one of the clerks—who is the best scholar—to commence upon the Times, or the Chronicle, and recite its entire contents aloud *pro bono publico*. With every advantage of lungs and elocution, the effect is singularly vapid. In barbers' shops and public-houses a fellow will get up, and spell out a paragraph which he communicates as some discovery. Another follows with *his* selection. So the entire journal transpires at length by piece-meal. Seldom-readers are slow readers, and without this expedient no one in the company would probably ever travel through the contents of a whole paper.

Newspapers always excite curiosity. No one ever lays one down without a feeling of disappointment.

What an eternal time that gentleman in black, at Nando's, keeps the paper! I am sick of hearing the waiter bawling out incessantly, "the Chronicle is in hand, Sir."

Coming into an inn at night—having ordered your supper—what can be more delightful than to find lying in the window-seat, left there time out of mind by the carelessness of some former guest—two or three numbers of the old Town and Country Magazine, with its amusing *tête-à-tête* pictures—"The Royal Lover and Lady G——;" "The Melting Platonic and the Old Beau,"—and such like antiquated scandal? Would you exchange it—at that time, and in that place—for a better book?

Poor Tobin, who latterly fell blind, did not regret it so much for the weightier kinds of reading—the Paradise Lost, or Comus, he could have *read* to him—but he missed the pleasure of skimming over with his own eye a magazine, or a light pamphlet.

I should not care to be caught in the serious avenues of some cathedral alone and reading *Candide*.

I do not remember a more whimsical surprise than having been once detected—by a familiar damsel—reclining at my ease upon the grass, on Primrose Hill (her Cythera), reading—*Pamela*. There was nothing in the book to make a man seriously ashamed at the exposure; but as she seated herself down by me, and seemed determined to read in company, I could have wished it had been—any other book. We read on very sociably for a few pages; and, not finding the author much to her taste, she got up, and—went away. Gentle casuist, I leave it to thee to conjecture, whether the blush (for there was one between us) was the property of the nymph or the swain in this dilemma. From me you shall never get the secret.

I am not much a friend to out-of-doors reading. I cannot settle my spirits to it. I knew a Unitarian minister, who was generally to be seen upon Snow-hill (as yet Skinner's-street *was not*), between the hours of ten and eleven in the morning, studying a volume of Lardner. I own this to have been a strain of abstraction beyond my reach. I used to admire how he sidled along, keeping clear of secular contacts. An illiterate encounter with a porter's knot, or a bread basket, would have quickly put to flight all the theology I am master of, and have left me worse than indifferent to the five points.

There is a class of street-readers, whom I can never contemplate without affection—the poor gentry, who, not having wherewithal to buy or hire a book, filch a little learning at the open stalls—the owner, with his hard eye, casting envious looks at them all the while, and thinking when they will have done. Venturing tenderly, page after page, expecting every moment when he shall interpose his interdict, and yet unable to deny themselves the gratification, they



" Keeping clear of secular contacts."

"snatch a fearful joy." Martin B——, in this way, by daily fragments, got through two volumes of Clarissa, when the stallkeeper damped his laudable ambition, by asking him (it was in his younger days) whether he meant to purchase the work. M. declares, that under no circumstance of his life did he ever peruse a book with half the satisfaction which he took in those uneasy snatches. A quaint poetess of

our day has moralised upon this subject in two very touching but homely stanzas.

I saw a boy with eager eye
Open a book upon a stall,
And read, as he'd devour it all;
Which when the stall-man did espy,
Soon to the boy I heard him call,
"You, Sir, you never buy a book,
Therefore in one you shall not look."
The boy pass'd slowly on, and with a sigh
He wish'd he never had been taught to read,
Then of the old churl's books he should have had no need.

Of sufferings the poor have many,
Which never can the rich annoy:
I soon perceived another boy,
Who look'd as if he'd not had any
Food—for that day at least—enjoy
The sight of cold meat in a tavern larder.
This boy's case, then thought I, is surely harder,
Thus hungry, longing, thus without a penny,
Beholding choice of dainty-dressed meat:
No wonder if he wish he ne'er had learn'd to eat.





THE OLD MARGATE HOY

I AM fond of passing my vacations (I believe I have said so before) at one or other of the Universities. Next to these my choice would fix me at some woody spot, such as the neighbourhood of Henley affords in abundance, on the banks of my beloved Thames. But somehow or other my cousin contrives to wheedle me once in three or four seasons to a watering place. Old attachments cling to her in spite of experience. We have been dull at Worthing one summer, duller at Brighton another, dullest at Eastbourn a third, and are at this moment doing dreary penance at—Hastings!—and all because we were happy many years ago for a brief week at Margate. That was our first sea-side experiment, and many circumstances combined to make it the most agreeable holyday of my life. We had neither of us seen the

sea, and we had never been from home so long together in company.

Can I forget thee, thou old Margate Hoy, with thy weather-beaten, sun-burnt captain, and his rough accommodations—ill-exchanged for the foppery and fresh-water niceness of the modern steam packet? To the winds and waves thou committedst thy goodly freightage, and didst ask no aid of magic fumes, and spells, and boiling cauldrons. With the gales of heaven thou wentest swimmingly; or, when it was their pleasure, stoodest still with sailor-like patience. Thy course was natural, not forced, as in a hot-bed; nor didst thou go poisoning the breath of ocean with sulphureous smoke—a great sea-chimæra, chimneying and furnacing the deep; or liker to that fire-god parching up Scamander.

Can I forget thy honest, yet slender crew, with their coy reluctant responses (yet to the suppression of anything like contempt) to the raw questions, which we of the great city would be ever and anon putting to them, as to the uses of this or that strange naval implement? 'Specially can I forget thee, thou happy medium, thou shade of refuge between us and them, conciliating interpreter of their skill to our simplicity, comfortable ambassador between sea and land!—whose sailor-trowsers did not more convincingly assure thee to be an adopted denizen of the former, than thy white cap, and whiter apron over them, with thy neat-fingered practice in thy culinary vocation, bespoke thee to have been of inland nurture heretofore—a master cook of Eastcheap? How busily didst thou ply thy multifarious occupation, cook, mariner, attendant, chamberlain: here, there, like another Ariel, flaming at once about all parts of the deck, yet with kindlier ministrations—not to assist the tempest, but, as if touched with a kindred sense of our infirmities, to soothe the qualms which



"The o'er-washing billows."

that untried motion might haply raise in our crude land-fancies. And when the o'er-washing billows drove us below deck (for it was far gone in October, and we had stiff and blowing weather) how did thy officious ministerings, still catering for our comfort, with cards, and cordials, and thy more cordial conversation, alleviate the closeness and the confinement of thy else (truth to say) not very savoury, nor very inviting, little cabin!

With these additaments to boot, we had on board a fellow-passenger, whose discourse in verity might have beguiled a longer voyage than we meditated, and have made mirth and wonder abound as far as

the Azores. He was a dark, Spanish-complexioned young man, remarkably handsome, with an officer-like assurance, and an insuppressible volubility of assertion. He was, in fact, the greatest liar I had met with then, or since. He was none of your hesitating, half story-tellers (a most painful description of mortals) who go on sounding your belief, and only giving you as much as they see you can swallow at a time—the nibbling pickpockets of your patience—but one who committed downright, day-light depredations upon his neighbour's faith. He did not stand shivering upon the brink, but was a hearty, thorough-paced liar, and plunged at once into the depths of your credulity. I partly believe, he made pretty sure of his company. Not many rich, not many wise, or learned, composed at that time the common stowage of a Margate packet. We were, I am afraid, a set of as unseasoned Londoners (let our enemies give it a worse name) as Aldermanbury, or Watling-street, at that time of day could have supplied. There might be an exception or two among us, but I scorn to make any invidious distinctions among such a jolly, companionable ship's company, as those were whom I sailed with. Something too must be conceded to the *Genius Loci*. Had the confident fellow told us half the legends on land, which he favoured us with on the other element, I flatter myself the good sense of most of us would have revolted. But we were in a new world, with everything unfamiliar about us, and the time and place disposed us to the reception of any prodigious marvel whatsoever. Time has obliterated from my memory much of his wild fablings; and the rest would appear but dull, as written, and to be read on shore. He had been Aide-de-camp (among other rare accidents and fortunes) to a Persian prince, and at one blow had stricken off the head of the King of Carimania on horseback. He,

of course, married the Prince's daughter. I forget what unlucky turn in the politics of that court, combining with the loss of his consort, was the reason of his quitting Persia; but with the rapidity of a magician, he transported himself, along with his hearers, back to England, where we still found him in the confidence of great ladies. There was some story of a Princess—Elizabeth, if I remember—having entrusted to his care an extraordinary casket of jewels, upon some extraordinary occasion—but, as I am not certain of the name or circumstance at this distance of time, I must leave it to the Royal daughters of England to settle the honour among themselves in private. I cannot call to mind half his pleasant wonders; but I perfectly remember, that in the course of his travels he had seen a phœnix; and he obligingly undeceived us of the vulgar error, that there is but one of that species at a time, assuring us that they were not uncommon in some parts of Upper Egypt. Hitherto he had found the most implicit listeners. His dreaming fancies had transported us beyond the "ignorant present." But when (still hardying more and more in his triumphs over our simplicity), he went on to affirm that he had actually sailed through the legs of the Colossus at Rhodes, it really became necessary to make a stand. And here I must do justice to the good sense and intrepidity of one of our party, a youth, that had hitherto been one of his most deferential auditors, who, from his recent reading, made bold to assure the gentleman, that there must be some mistake, as "the Colossus in question had been destroyed long since;" to whose opinion, delivered with all modesty, our hero was obliging enough to concede thus much, "the figure was indeed a little damaged." This was the only opposition he met with, and it did not at all seem to stagger him, for he proceeded with his fables, which

the same youth appeared to swallow with still more complacency than ever,—confirmed, as it were, by the extreme candour of that concession. With these prodigies he wheedled us on till we came in sight of the Reculvers, which one of our own company (having been the voyage before) immediately recognising, and pointing out to us, was considered by us as no ordinary seaman.

All this time sat upon the edge of the deck quite a different character. It was a lad, apparently very poor, very infirm, and very patient. His eye was ever on the sea, with a smile; and, if he caught now and then some snatches of these wild legends, it was by accident, and they seemed not to concern him. The waves to him whispered more pleasant stories. He was as one, being with us, but not of us. He heard the bell of dinner ring without stirring; and when some of us pulled out our private stores—our cold meat and our salads—he produced none, and seemed to want none. Only a solitary biscuit he had laid in; provision for the one or two days and nights, to which these vessels then were oftentimes obliged to prolong their voyage. Upon a nearer acquaintance with him, which he seemed neither to court nor decline, we learned that he was going to Margate, with the hope of being admitted into the Infirmary there for sea-bathing. His disease was a scrofula, which appeared to have eaten all over him. He expressed great hopes of a cure; and when we asked him, whether he had any friends where he was going, he replied, "he *had* no friends."

These pleasant, and some mournful passages with the first sight of the sea, co-operating with youth, and a sense of holydays, and out-of-door adventure, to me that had been pent up in populous cities for many months before,—have left upon my mind the fragrance as of summer days gone by, bequeathing

nothing but their remembrance for cold and wintry hours to chew upon.

Will it be thought a digression (it may spare some unwelcome comparisons), if I endeavour to account for the *dissatisfaction* which I have heard so many persons confess to have felt (as I did myself feel in part on this occasion), *at the sight of the sea for the first time?* I think the reason usually given—referring to the incapacity of actual objects for satisfying our preconceptions of them—scarcely goes deep enough into the question. Let the same person see a lion, an elephant, a mountain, for the first time in his life, and he shall perhaps feel himself a little mortified. The things do not fill up that space, which the idea of them seemed to take up in his mind. But they have still a correspondency to his first notion, and in time grow up to it, so as to produce a very similar impression: enlarging themselves (if I may say so) upon familiarity. But the sea remains a disappointment.—Is it not, that in *the latter* we had expected to behold (absurdly, I grant, but, I am afraid, by the law of imagination unavoidably) not a definite object, as those wild beasts, or that mountain compassable by the eye, but *all the sea at once*, THE COMMENSURATE ANTAGONIST OF THE EARTH? I do not say we tell ourselves so much, but the craving of the mind is to be satisfied with nothing less. I will suppose the case of a young person of fifteen (as I then was) knowing nothing of the sea, but from description. He comes to it for the first time—all that he has been reading of it all his life, and *that* the most enthusiastic part of life,—all he has gathered from narratives of wandering seamen; what he has gained from true voyages, and what he cherishes as credulously from romance and poetry; crowding their images, and exacting strange tributes from expectation.—He thinks of the great deep, and

of those who go down unto it; of its thousand isles, and of the vast continents it washes; of its receiving the mighty Plate, or Orellana, into its bosom, without disturbance, or sense of augmentation; of Biscay swells, and the mariner

> For many a day, and many a dreadful night,
> Incessant labouring round the stormy Cape;

of fatal rocks, and the "still-vexed Bermoothes;" of great whirlpools, and the water-spout; of sunken ships, and sumless treasures swallowed up in the unrestoring depths; of fishes and quaint monsters, to which all that is terrible on earth—

> Be but as buggs to frighten babes withal,
> Compared with the creatures in the sea's entral;

of naked savages, and Juan Fernandez; of pearls, and shells; of coral beds, and of enchanted isles; of mermaids' grots—

I do not assert that in sober earnest he expects to be shown all these wonders at once, but he is under the tyranny of a mighty faculty, which haunts him with confused hints and shadows of all these; and when the actual object opens first upon him, seen (in tame weather too most likely) from our unromantic coasts—a speck, a slip of sea-water, as it shows to him—what can it prove but a very unsatisfying and even diminutive entertainment? Or if he has come to it from the mouth of a river, was it much more than the river widening? and, even out of sight of land, what had he but a flat watery horizon about him, nothing comparable to the vast o'er-curtaining sky, his familiar object, seen daily without dread or amazement?—Who, in similar circumstances, has not been tempted to exclaim with Charoba, in the poem of Gebir,

> Is this the mighty ocean? is this *all?*

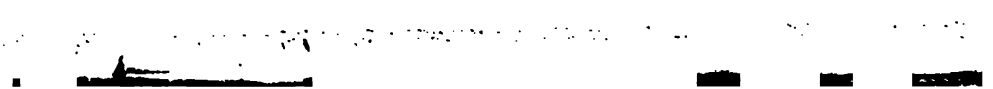
I love town, or country; but this detestable Cinque

Port is neither. I hate these scrubbed shoots, thrusting out their starved foliage from between the horrid fissures of dusty innutritious rocks; which the amateur calls "verdure to the edge of the sea." I require woods, and they show me stunted coppices. I cry out for the water-brooks, and pant for fresh streams, and inland murmurs. I cannot stand all day on the naked beach, watching the capricious hues of the sea, shifting like the colours of a dying mullet. I am tired of looking out at the windows of this island-prison. I would fain retire into the interior of my cage. While I gaze upon the sea, I want to be on it, over it, across it. It binds me in with chains, as of iron. My thoughts are abroad. I should not so feel in Staffordshire. There is no home for me here. There is no sense of home at Hastings. It is a place of fugitive resort, an heterogeneous assemblage of sea-mews and stock-brokers, Amphitrites of the town, and misses that coquet with the Ocean. If it were what it was in its primitive shape, and what it ought to have remained, a fair honest fishing-town, and no more, it were something—with a few straggling fishermen's huts scattered about, artless as its cliffs, and with their materials filched from them, it were something. I could abide to dwell with Meschek; to assort with fisher-swains, and smugglers. There are, or I dream there are, many of this latter occupation here. Their faces become the place. I like a smuggler. He is the only honest thief. He robs nothing but the revenue,—an abstraction I never greatly cared about. I could go out with them in their mackarel boats, or about their less ostensible business, with some satisfaction. I can even tolerate those poor victims to monotony, who from day to day pace along the beach, in endless progress and recurrence, to watch their illicit countrymen—townsfolk or brethren perchance—whistling to the sheathing

and unsheathing of their cutlasses (their only solace), who under the mild name of preventive service, keep up a legitimated civil warfare in the deplorable absence of a foreign one, to show their detestation of run hollands and zeal for old England. But it is the visitants from town, that come here to *say* that they have been here, with no more relish of the sea than a pond perch, or a dace might be supposed to have, that are my aversion. I feel like a foolish dace in these regions, and have as little toleration for myself here, as for them. What can they want here? if they had a true relish of the ocean, why have they brought all this land luggage with them? or why pitch their civilised tents in the desert? What mean these scanty book-rooms—marine libraries as they entitle them—if the sea were, as they would have us believe, a book "to read strange matter in"? what are their foolish concert-rooms, if they come, as they would fain be thought to do, to listen to the music of the waves? All is false and hollow pretension. They come, because it is the fashion, and to spoil the nature of the place. They are mostly, as I have said, stock-brokers; but I have watched the better sort of them—now and then, an honest citizen (of the old stamp), in the simplicity of his heart, shall bring down his wife and daughters, to taste the sea breezes. I always know the date of their arrival. It is easy to see it in their countenance. A day or two they go wandering on the shingles, picking up cockle-shells, and thinking them great things; but, in a poor week, imagination slackens; they begin to discover that cockles produce no pearls, and then—O then!—if I could interpret for the pretty creatures, (I know they have not the courage to confess it themselves) how gladly would they exchange their sea-side rambles for a Sunday walk on the greensward of their accustomed Twickenham meadows!



They go wandering on the shingles



I would ask of one of these sea-charmed emigrants, who think they truly love the sea, with its wild usages, what would their feelings be, if some of the unsophisticated aborigines of this place, encouraged by their courteous questionings here, should venture, on the faith of such assured sympathy between them, to return the visit, and come up to see—London. I must imagine them with their fishing-tackle on their back, as we carry our town necessaries. What a sensation would it cause in Lothbury! What vehement laughter would it not excite among

The daughters of Cheapside, and wives of Lombard-street.

I am sure that no town-bred, or inland-born subjects, can feel their true and natural nourishment at these sea-places. Nature, where she does not mean us for mariners and vagabonds, bids us stay at home. The salt foam seems to nourish a spleen. I am not half so good-natured as by the milder waters of my natural river. I would exchange these sea-gulls for swans, and scud a swallow for ever about the banks of Thamesis.





THE CONVALESCENT

A PRETTY severe fit of indisposition which, under the name of a nervous fever, has made a prisoner of me for some weeks past, and is but slowly leaving me, has reduced me to an incapacity of reflecting upon any topic foreign to itself. Expect no healthy conclusions from me this month, reader ; I can offer you only sick men's dreams.

And truly the whole state of sickness is such ; for what else is it but a magnificent dream for a man to lie a-bed, and draw day-light curtains about him ; and, shutting out the sun, to induce a total oblivion of all the works which are going on under it? To become

insensible to all the operations of life, except the beatings of one feeble pulse?

If there be a regal solitude, it is a sick bed. How the patient lords it there; what caprices he acts without controul! how king-like he sways his pillow —tumbling, and tossing, and shifting, and lowering, and thumping, and flatting, and moulding it, to the ever varying requisitions of his throbbing temples.

He changes *sides* oftener than a politician. Now he lies full length, then half-length, obliquely, transversely, head and feet quite across the bed; and none accuses him of tergiversation. Within the four curtains he is absolute. They are his Mare Clausum.

How sickness enlarges the dimensions of a man's self to himself! he is his own exclusive object. Supreme selfishness is inculcated upon him as his only duty. 'Tis the Two Tables of the Law to him. He has nothing to think of but how to get well. What passes out of doors, or within them, so he hear not the jarring of them, affects him not.

A little while ago he was greatly concerned in the event of a law-suit, which was to be the making or the marring of his dearest friend. He was to be seen trudging about upon this man's errand to fifty quarters of the town at once, jogging this witness, refreshing that solicitor. The cause was to come on yesterday. He is absolutely as indifferent to the decision, as if it were a question to be tried at Pekin. Peradventure from some whispering, going on about the house, not intended for his hearing, he picks up enough to make him understand, that things went cross-grained in the Court yesterday, and his friend is ruined. But the word "friend," and the word "ruin," disturb him no more than so much jargon. He is not to think of any thing but how to get better.

What a world of foreign cares are merged in that absorbing consideration!

THE CONVALESCENT

He has put on the strong armour of sickness, he is wrapped in the callous hide of suffering, he keeps his sympathy, like some curious vintage, under trusty lock and key, for his own use only.

He lies pitying himself, honing and moaning to himself; he yearneth over himself; his bowels are even melted within him, to think what he suffers; he is not ashamed to weep over himself.

He is for ever plotting how to do some good to himself; studying little stratagems and artificial alleviations.

He makes the most of himself; dividing himself, by an allowable fiction, into as many distinct individuals, as he hath sore and sorrowing members. Sometimes he meditates—as of a thing apart from him—upon his poor aching head, and that dull pain which, dozing or waking, lay in it all the past night like a log, or palpable substance of pain, not to be removed without opening the very skull, as it seemed, to take it thence. Or he pities his long, clammy, attenuated fingers. He compassionates himself all over; and his bed is a very discipline of humanity, and tender heart.

He is his own sympathiser; and instinctively feels that none can so well perform that office for him. He cares for few spectators to his tragedy. Only that punctual face of the old nurse pleases him, that announces his broths, and his cordials. He likes it because it is so unmoved, and because he can pour forth his feverish ejaculations before it as unreservedly as to his bed-post.

To the world's business he is dead. He understands not what the callings and occupations of mortals are; only he has a glimmering conceit of some such thing, when the doctor makes his daily call: and even in the lines of that busy face he reads no multiplicity of patients, but solely conceives of



" His broths, and his cordials."

himself as *the sick man*. To what other uneasy couch the good man is hastening, when he slips out of his chamber, folding up his thin douceur so carefully for fear of rustling—is no speculation which he can at present entertain. He thinks only of the regular return of the same phenomenon at the same hour to-morrow.

Household rumours touch him not. Some faint murmur, indicative of life going on within the house, soothes him, while he knows not distinctly what it is. He is not to know any thing, not to think of any thing. Servants gliding up or down the distant staircase, treading as upon velvet, gently keep his ear

awake, so long as he troubles not himself further than with some feeble guess at their errands. Exacter knowledge would be a burthen to him: he can just endure the pressure of conjecture. He opens his eye faintly at the dull stroke of the muffled knocker, and closes it again without asking "Who was it?" He is flattered by a general notion that inquiries are making after him, but he cares not to know the name of the inquirer. In the general stillness, and awful hush of the house, he lies in state, and feels his sovereignty.

To be sick is to enjoy monarchal prerogatives. Compare the silent tread, and quiet ministry, almost by the eye only, with which he is served—with the careless demeanour, the unceremonious goings in and out (slapping of doors, or leaving them open) of the very same attendants, when he is getting a little better—and you will confess, that from the bed of sickness (throne let me rather call it) to the elbow chair of convalescence, is a fall from dignity, amounting to a deposition.

How convalescence shrinks a man back to his pristine stature! where is now the space, which he occupied so lately, in his own, in the family's eye?

The scene of his regalities, his sick room, which was his presence chamber, where he lay and acted his despotic fancies—how is it reduced to a common bed-room! The trimness of the very bed has something petty and unmeaning about it. It is *made* every day. How unlike to that wavy many-furrowed, oceanic surface, which it presented so short a time since, when to *make* it was a service not to be thought of at oftener than three or four day revolutions, when the patient was with pain and grief to be lifted for a little while out of it, to submit to the encroachments of unwelcome neatness, and decencies

which his shaken frame deprecated; then to be lifted into it again, for another three or four days' respite, to flounder it out of shape again, while every fresh furrow was a historical record of some shifting posture, some uneasy turning, some seeking for a little ease; and the shrunken skin scarce told a truer story than the crumpled coverlid.

Hushed are those mysterious sighs—those groans—so much more awful, while we knew not from what caverns of vast hidden suffering they proceeded. The Lernean pangs are quenched. The riddle of sickness is solved; and Philoctetes is become an ordinary personage.

Perhaps some relic of the sick man's dream of greatness survives in the still lingering visitations of the medical attendant. But how is he too changed with every thing else! Can this be he—this man of news—of chat—of anecdotes—of every thing but physic—can this be he, who so lately came between the patient and his cruel enemy, as on some solemn embassy from Nature, erecting herself into a high mediating party?—Pshaw! 'tis some old woman.

Farewell with him all that made sickness pompous—the spell that hushed the household—the desert-like stillness, felt throughout its inmost chambers—the mute attendance—the enquiry by looks—the still softer delicacies of self-attention—the sole and single eye of distemper alonely fixed upon itself—world-thoughts excluded—the man a world unto himself—his own theatre—

What a speck is he dwindled into!

In this flat swamp of convalescence, left by the ebb of sickness, yet far enough from the terra firma of established health, your note, dear Editor, reached me, requesting—an article. In Articulo Mortis, thought I; but it is something hard—and the quibble,

wretched as it was, relieved me. The summons, unreasonable as it appeared, seemed to link me on again to the petty businesses of life, which I had lost sight of; a gentle call to activity, however trivial; a wholesome weaning from that preposterous dream of self-absorption—the puffy state of sickness—in which I confess to have lain so long, insensible to the magazines and monarchies, of the world alike; to its laws, and to its literature. The hypochondriac flatus is subsiding; the acres, which in imagination I had spread over—for the sick man swells in the sole contemplation of his single sufferings, till he becomes a Tityus to himself—are wasting to a span; and for the giant of self-importance, which I was so lately, you have me once again in my natural pretensions—the lean and meagre figure of your insignificant Essayist.





SANITY OF TRUE GENIUS

SO far from the position holding true, that great wit (or genius, in our modern way of speaking) has a necessary alliance with insanity, the greatest wits, on the contrary, will ever be found to be the sanest writers. It is impossible for the mind to conceive of a mad Shakspeare. The greatness of wit, by which the poetic talent is here chiefly to be understood, manifests itself in the admirable balance of all the faculties. Madness is the disproportionate straining or excess of any one of them. "So strong a wit," says Cowley, speaking of a poetical friend,

> "——did Nature to him frame,
> As all things but his judgment overcame;
> His judgment like the heavenly moon did show,
> Tempering that mighty sea below."

The ground of the mistake is, that men, finding in the raptures of the higher poetry a condition of exaltation, to which they have no parallel in their

own experience, besides the spurious resemblance of it in dreams and fevers, impute a state of dreaminess and fever to the poet. But the true poet dreams being awake. He is not possessed by his subject, but has dominion over it. In the groves of Eden he walks familiar as in his native paths. He ascends the empyrean heaven, and is not intoxicated. He treads the burning marl without dismay; he wins his flight without self-loss through realms of chaos "and old night." Or if, abandoning himself to that severer chaos of a "human mind untuned," he is content awhile to be mad with Lear, or to hate mankind (a sort of madness) with Timon, neither is that madness, nor this misanthropy, so unchecked, but that,—never letting the reins of reason wholly go, while most he seems to do so,—he has his better genius still whispering at his ear, with the good servant Kent suggesting saner counsels, or with the honest steward Flavius recommending kindlier resolutions. Where he seems most to recede from humanity, he will be found the truest to it. From beyond the scope of Nature if he summon possible existences, he subjugates them to the law of her consistency. He is beautifully loyal to that sovereign directress, even when he appears most to betray and desert her. His ideal tribes submit to policy; his very monsters are tamed to his hand, even as that wild sea-brood, shepherded by Proteus. He tames and he clothes them with attributes of flesh and blood, till they wonder at themselves, like Indian Islanders forced to submit to European vesture. Caliban, the Witches, are as true to the laws of their own nature (ours with a difference), as Othello, Hamlet, and Macbeth. Herein the great and the little wits are differenced; that if the latter wander ever so little from nature or actual existence, they lose themselves, and their readers. Their phantoms are lawless; their visions night-

mares. They do not create, which implies shaping and consistency. Their imaginations are not active—for to be active is to call something into act and form—but passive, as men in sick dreams. For the supernatural, or something super-added to what we know of nature, they give you the plainly non-natural. And if this were all, and that these mental hallucinations were discoverable only in the treatment of subjects out of nature, or transcending it, the judgment might with some plea be pardoned if it ran riot, and a little wantonised: but even in the describing of real and every-day life, that which is before their eyes, one of these lesser wits shall more deviate from nature—show more of that inconsequence, which has a natural alliance with frenzy,—than a great genius in his "maddest fits," as Wither somewhere calls them. We appeal to any one that is acquainted with the common run of Lane's novels,—as they existed some twenty or thirty years back,—those scanty intellectual viands of the whole female reading public, till a happier genius arose, and expelled for ever the innutritious phantoms,—whether he has not found his brain more "betossed," his memory more puzzled, his sense of when and where more confounded, among the improbable events, the incoherent incidents, the inconsistent characters, or no-characters, of some third-rate love intrigue—where the persons shall be a Lord Glendamour and a Miss Rivers, and the scene only alternate between Bath and Bond Street—a more bewildering dreaminess induced upon him, than he has felt wandering over all the fairy grounds of Spenser. In the productions we refer to, nothing but names and places is familiar; the persons are neither of this world nor of any other conceivable one; an endless string of activities without purpose, or purposes destitute of motive:—we meet phantoms in our known walks; *fantasques*

only christened. In the poet we have names which announce fiction; and we have absolutely no place at all, for the things and persons of the Fairy Queen prate not of their "whereabout." But in their inner nature, and the law of their speech and actions, we are at home and upon acquainted ground. The one turns life into a dream; the other to the wildest dreams gives the sobrieties of every-day occurrences. By what subtile art of tracing the mental processes it is effected, we are not philosophers enough to explain, but in that wonderful episode of the cave of Mammon, in which the Money God appears first in the lowest form of a miser, is then a worker of metals, and becomes the god of all the treasures of the world; and has a daughter, Ambition, before whom all the world kneels for favours—with the Hesperian fruit, the waters of Tantalus, with Pilate washing his hands vainly, but not impertinently, in the same stream—that we should be at one moment in the cave of an old hoarder of treasures, at the next at the forge of the Cyclops, in a palace and yet in hell, all at once, with the shifting mutations of the most rambling dream, and our judgment yet all the time awake, and neither able nor willing to detect the fallacy,—is a proof of that hidden sanity which still guides the poet in his wildest seeming-aberrations.

It is not enough to say that the whole episode is a copy of the mind's conceptions in sleep; it is, in some sort—but what a copy! Let the most romantic of us, that has been entertained all night with the spectacle of some wild and magnificent vision, recombine it in the morning, and try it by his waking judgment. That which appeared so shifting, and yet so coherent, while that faculty was passive, when it comes under cool examination, shall appear so reasonless and so unlinked, that we are ashamed to

been so deluded ; and to have taken, though sleep, a monster for a god. But the transitions s episode are every whit as violent as in the extravagant dream, and yet the waking judg- ratifies them.





CAPTAIN JACKSON

AMONG the deaths in our obituary
month, I observe with concern,
cottage on the Bath road, Captain Jackson.
name and attribution are common enou
a feeling like reproach persuades me, that t
have been no other in fact than my dear ol
who some five-and-twenty years ago rented
ment, which he was pleased to dignify
appellation here used, about a mile from W
Green. Alack, how good men, and the go
they do us, slide out of memory, and are rec

by the surprise of some such sad memento as that which now lies before us!'

He whom I mean was a retired half-pay officer, with a wife and two grown-up daughters, whom he maintained with the port and notions of gentlewomen upon that slender professional allowance. Comely girls they were too.

And was I in danger of forgetting this man?—his cheerful suppers—the noble tone of hospitality, when first you set your foot in *the cottage*—the anxious ministerings about you, where little or nothing (God knows) was to be ministered.—Althea's horn in a poor platter—the power of self-enchantment, by which, in his magnificent wishes to entertain you, he multiplied his means to bounties.

You saw with your bodily eyes indeed what seemed a bare scrag—cold savings from the foregone meal—remnant hardly sufficient to send a mendicant from the door contented. But in the copious will—the revelling imagination of your host—the "mind, the mind, Master Shallow," whole beeves were spread before you—hecatombs—no end appeared to the profusion.

It was the widow's cruse—the loaves and fishes; carving could not lessen nor helping diminish it—the stamina were left—the elemental bone still flourished, divested of its accidents.

"Let us live while we can," methinks I hear the open-handed creature exclaim; "while we have, let us not want;" "here is plenty left;" "want for nothing"—with many more such hospitable sayings, the spurs of appetite, and old concomitants of smoking boards, and feast-oppressed chargers. Then sliding a slender ratio of Single Gloucester upon his wife's plate, or the daughters', he would convey the remnant rind into his own, with a merry quirk of "the nearer the bone," &c., and declaring that he

universally preferred the outside. For we had our table distinctions, you are to know, and some of us in a manner sate above the salt. None but his guest or guests dreamed of tasting flesh luxuries at night, the fragments were *verè hospitibus sacra.* But of one thing or another there was always enough, and leavings: only he would sometimes finish the remainder crust, to show that he wished no savings.

Wine we had none; nor, except on very rare occasions, spirits; but the sensation of wine was there. Some thin kind of ale I remember—"British beverage," he would say. "Push about, my boys;" "Drink to your sweethearts, girls." At every meagre draught a toast must ensue, or a song. All the forms of good liquor were there, with none of the effects wanting. Shut your eyes, and you would swear a capacious bowl of punch was foaming in the centre, with beams of generous Port or Madeira radiating to it from each of the table corners. You got flustered without knowing whence; tipsy upon words; and reeled under the potency of his unperforming Bacchanalian encouragements.

We had our songs—"Why, Soldiers, Why"—and the "British Grenadiers"—in which last we were all obliged to bear chorus. Both the daughters sang. Their proficiency was a nightly theme—the masters he had given them—the "no-expense" which he spared to accomplish them in a science "so necessary to young women." But then—they could not sing "without the instrument."

Sacred, and, by me, never-to-be-violated, Secrets of Poverty! Should I disclose your honest aims at grandeur, your makeshift efforts of magnificence? Sleep, sleep, with all thy broken keys, if one of the bunch be extant; thrummed by a thousand ancestral thumbs; dear, cracked spinnet of dearer Louisa! Without mention of mine, be dumb, thou thin



dear, cracked spinnet!'

panier of her thinner warble! A veil be over the dear delighted face of the well- d father, who now haply listening to cherubic scarce feels sincerer pleasure than when she ned thy time-shaken chords responsive to the ings of that slender image of a voice.

were not without our literary talk either. It t extend far, but as far as it went, it was good. bottomed well; had good grounds to go upon. *cottage* was a room, which tradition authenti- o have been the same in which Glover, in his nal retirements, had penned the greater part of onidas. This circumstance was nightly quoted, none of the present inmates, that I could r, appeared ever to have met with the poem tion. But that was no matter. Glover had there, and the anecdote was pressed into the t of the family importance. It diffused a l air through the apartment, the little side nt of which (the poet's study window), open- on a superb view as far as the pretty spire of v, over domains and patrimonial acres, not a or square yard whereof our host could call his et gave occasion to an immoderate expansion nity shall I call it?—in his bosom, as he l them in a glowing summer evening. It was , he took it all in, and communicated rich s of it to his guests. It was a part of his , his hospitality; it was going over his grounds; s lord for the time of showing them, and you plicit lookers-up to his magnificence.

was a juggler, who threw mists before your you had no time to detect his fallacies. He say, "Hand me the *silver* sugar tongs;" and you could discover that it was a single spoon, at *plated*, he would disturb and captivate your ation by a misnomer of "the urn" for a tea

kettle; or by calling a homely bench a sofa. Rich men direct you to their furniture, poor ones divert you from it; he neither did one nor the other, but by simply assuming that every thing was handsome about him, you were positively at a demur what you did, or did not see, at *the cottage*. With nothing to live on, he seemed to live on every thing. He had a stock of wealth in his mind; not that which is properly termed *Content*, for in truth he was not to be *contained* at all, but overflowed all bounds by the force of a magnificent self-delusion.

Enthusiasm is catching; and even his wife, a sober native of North Britain, who generally saw things more as they were, was not proof against the continual collision of his credulity. Her daughters were rational and discreet young women; in the main, perhaps, not insensible to their true circumstances. I have seen them assume a thoughtful air at times. But such was the preponderating opulence of his fancy, that I am persuaded, not for any half hour together did they ever look their own prospects fairly in the face. There was no resisting the vortex of his temperament. His riotous imagination conjured up handsome settlements before their eyes, which kept them up in the eye of the world too, and seem at last to have realised themselves; for they both have married since, I am told, more than respectably.

It is long since, and my memory waxes dim on some subjects, or I should wish to convey some notion of the manner in which the pleasant creature described the circumstances of his own wedding-day. I faintly remember something of a chaise and four, in which he made his entry into Glasgow on that morning to fetch the bride home, or carry her thither, I forget which. It so completely made out the stanza of the old ballad—

CAPTAIN JACKSON

When we came down through Glasgow town,
We were a comely sight to see;
My love was clad in black velvet,
And I myself in cramasie.

I suppose it was the only occasion, upon which his own actual splendour at all corresponded with the world's notions on that subject. In homely cart, or travelling caravan, by whatever humble vehicle they chanced to be transported in less prosperous days, the ride through Glasgow came back upon his fancy, not as a humiliating contrast, but as a fair occasion for reverting to that one day's state. It seemed an "equipage etern" from which no power of fate or fortune, once mounted, had power thereafter to dislodge him.

There is some merit in putting a handsome face upon indigent circumstances. To bully and swagger away the sense of them before strangers, may not be always discommendable. Tibbs, and Bobadil, even when detected, have more of our admiration than contempt. But for a man to put the cheat upon himself; to play the Bobadil at home; and, steeped in poverty up to the lips, to fancy himself all the while chin-deep in riches, is a strain of constitutional philosophy, and a mastery over fortune, which was reserved for my old friend Captain Jackson.



THE SUPERANNUATED MAN

Sera tamen respexit
Libertas. VIRGIL.
A clerk I was in London gay.
O'KEEFE.

IF peradventure, Reader, it has been thy lot to waste the golden years of thy life—thy shining youth—in the irksome confinement of an office; to have thy prison days prolonged through middle age down to decrepitude and silver hairs, without hope of

release or respite; to have lived to forget that there are such things as holydays, or to remember them but as the prerogatives of childhood; then, and then only, will you be able to appreciate my deliverance.

It is now six and thirty years since I took my seat at the desk in Mincing-lane. Melancholy was the transition at fourteen from the abundant playtime, and the frequently-intervening vacations of school days, to the eight, nine, and sometimes ten hours' a-day attendance at a counting-house. But time partially reconciles us to anything. I gradually became content—doggedly content, as wild animals in cages.

It is true I had my Sundays to myself; but Sundays, admirable as the institution of them is for purposes of worship, are for that very reason the very worst adapted for days of unbending and recreation. In particular, there is a gloom for me attendant upon a city Sunday, a weight in the air. I miss the cheerful cries of London, the music, and the ballad-singers—the buzz and stirring murmur of the streets. Those eternal bells depress me. The closed shops repel me. Prints, pictures, all the glittering and endless succession of knacks and gewgaws, and ostentatiously displayed wares of tradesmen, which make a week-day saunter through the less busy parts of the metropolis so delightful—are shut out. No book-stalls deliciously to idle over—No busy faces to recreate the idle man who contemplates them ever passing by—the very face of business a charm by contrast to his temporary relaxation from it. Nothing to be seen but unhappy countenances—or half-happy at best—of emancipated 'prentices and little tradesfolks, with here and there a servant maid that has got leave to go out, who, slaving all the week, with the habit has lost almost the capacity of enjoying a free hour; and livelily expressing the hollowness of a

day's pleasuring. The very strollers in the fields on that day looked anything but comfortable.

But besides Sundays I had a day at Easter, and a day at Christmas, with a full week in the summer to go and air myself in my native fields of Hertfordshire. This last was a great indulgence; and the prospect of its recurrence, I believe, alone kept me up through the year, and made my durance tolerable. But when the week came round, did the glittering phantom of the distance keep touch with me? or rather was it not a series of seven uneasy days, spent in restless pursuit of pleasure, and a wearisome anxiety to find out how to make the most of them? Where was the quiet, where the promised rest? Before I had a taste of it, it was vanished. I was at the desk again, counting upon the fifty-one tedious weeks that must intervene before such another snatch would come. Still the prospect of its coming threw something of an illumination upon the darker side of my captivity. Without it, as I have said, I could scarcely have sustained my thraldom.

Independently of the rigours of attendance, I have ever been haunted with a sense (perhaps a mere caprice) of incapacity for business. This, during my latter years, had increased to such a degree, that it was visible in all the lines of my countenance. My health and my good spirits flagged. I had perpetually a dread of some crisis, to which I should be found unequal. Besides my daylight servitude, I served over again all night in my sleep, and would awake with terrors of imaginary false entries, errors in my accounts, and the like. I was fifty years of age, and no prospect of emancipation presented itself. I had grown to my desk, as it were; and the wood had entered into my soul.

My fellows in the office would sometimes rally me upon the trouble legible in my countenance; but I

did not know that it had raised the suspicions of any of my employers, when on the 5th of last month, a day ever to be remembered by me, L——, the junior partner in the firm, calling me on one side, directly taxed me with my bad looks, and frankly enquired the cause of them. So taxed, I honestly made confession of my infirmity, and added that I was afraid I should eventually be obliged to resign his service. He spoke some words of course to hearten me, and there the matter rested. A whole week I remained labouring under the impression that I had acted imprudently in my disclosure; that I had foolishly given a handle against myself, and had been anticipating my own dismissal. A week passed in this manner, the most anxious one, I verily believe, in my whole life, when on the evening of the 12th of April, just as I was about quitting my desk to go home (it might be about eight o'clock), I received an awful summons to attend the presence of the whole assembled firm in the formidable back parlour. I thought, now my time is surely come, I have done for myself, I am going to be told that they have no longer occasion for me. L——, I could see, smiled at the terror I was in, which was a little relief to me, —when to my utter astonishment B——, the eldest partner, began a formal harangue to me on the length of my services, my very meritorious conduct during the whole of the time (the deuce, thought I, how did he find out that? I protest I never had the confidence to think as much). He went on to descant on the expediency of retiring at a certain time of life (how my heart panted!), and asking me a few questions as to the amount of my own property, of which I have a little, ended with a proposal, to which his three partners nodded a grave assent, that I should accept from the house, which I had served so well, a pension for life to the amount

of two-thirds of my accustomed salary—a magnificent offer! I do not know what I answered between surprise and gratitude, but it was understood that I accepted their proposal, and I was told that I was free from that hour to leave their service. I stammered out a bow, and at just ten minutes after eight I went home—for ever. This noble benefit —gratitude forbids me to conceal their names—I owe to the kindness of the most munificent firm in the world—the house of Boldero, Merryweather, Bosanquet, and Lacy—

Esto perpetua!

For the first day or two I felt stunned, overwhelmed. I could only apprehend my felicity; I was too confused to taste it sincerely. I wandered about, thinking I was happy, and knowing that I was not. I was in the condition of a prisoner in the Old Bastile, suddenly let loose after a forty years' confinement. I could scarce trust myself with myself. It was like passing out of Time into Eternity—for it is a sort of Eternity for a man to have his Time all to himself. It seemed to me that I had more time on my hands than I could ever manage. From a poor man, poor in Time, I was suddenly lifted up into a vast revenue; I could see no end of my possessions; I wanted some steward, or judicious bailiff, to manage my estates in Time for me. And here let me caution persons grown old in active business, not lightly, nor without weighing their own resources, to forego their customary employment all at once, for there may be danger in it. I feel it by myself, but I know that my resources are sufficient; and now that those first giddy raptures have subsided, I have a quiet home-feeling of the blessedness of my condition. I am in no hurry. Having all holidays, I am as though I had none. If Time hung heavy upon me,



"A formal harangue."



could walk it away; but I do *not* walk all day long, I used to do in those old transient holidays, thirty les a day, to make the most of them. If Time ere troublesome, I could read it away, but I do *not* ad in that violent measure, with which, having no ime my own but candlelight Time, I used to ary out my head and eye-sight in by-gone winters. walk, read, or scribble (as now) just when the fit zes me. I no longer hunt after pleasure; I let it me to me. I am like the man

> ——that's born, and has his years come to him,
> In some green desert.

"Years," you will say; "what is this superannuated npleton calculating upon? He has already told us is past fifty."

I have indeed lived nominally fifty years, but duct out of them the hours which I have lived to her people, and not to myself, and you will find me ill a young fellow. For *that* is the only true Time, hich a man can properly call his own, that which has all to himself; the rest, though in some sense may be said to live it, is other people's time, not s. The remnant of my poor days, long or short, is least multiplied for me threefold. My ten next ars, if I stretch so far, will be as long as any eceding thirty. 'Tis a fair rule-of-three sum.

Among the strange fantasies which beset me at e commencement of my freedom, and of which all aces are not yet gone, one was, that a vast tract of me had intervened since I quitted the Counting ouse. I could not conceive of it as an affair of sterday. The partners, and the clerks with whom had for so many years, and for so many hours in ch day of the year been so closely associated— ing suddenly removed from them—they seemed as ad to me. There is a fine passage, which may

serve to illustrate this fancy, in a Tragedy by Sir Robert Howard, speaking of a friend's death:—

> ——'Twas but just now he went away;
> I have not since had time to shed a tear;
> And yet the distance does the same appear
> As if he had been a thousand years from me.
> Time takes no measure in Eternity.

To dissipate this awkward feeling, I have been fain to go among them once or twice since: to visit my old desk-fellows—my co-brethren of the quill—that I had left below in the state militant. Not all the kindness with which they received me could quite restore to me that pleasant familiarity, which I had heretofore enjoyed among them. We cracked some of our old jokes, but methought they went off but faintly. My old desk; the peg where I hung my hat, were appropriated to another. I knew it must be, but I could not take it kindly. D——l take me, if I did not feel some remorse—beast, if I had not,—at quitting my old compeers, the faithful partners of my toils for six and thirty years, that smoothed for me with their jokes and conundrums the ruggedness of my professional road. Had it been so rugged then after all? or was I a coward simply? Well, it is too late to repent; and I also know, that these suggestions are a common fallacy of the mind on such occasions. But my heart smote me. I had violently broken the bands betwixt us. It was at least not courteous. I shall be some time before I get quite reconciled to the separation. Farewell, old cronies, yet not for long, for again and again I will come among ye, if I shall have your leave. Farewell Ch——, dry, sarcastic, and friendly! Do——, mild, slow to move, and gentlemanly! Pl——, officious to do, and to volunteer, good services!—and thou, thou dreary pile, fit mansion for a Gresham or a Whittington of old, stately House of Merchants; with thy

labyrinthine passages, and light-excluding, pent-up offices, where candles for one half the year supplied the place of the sun's light ; unhealthy contributor to my weal, stern fosterer of my living, farewell ! In thee remain, and not in the obscure collection of some wandering bookseller, my "works!" There let them rest, as I do from my labours, piled on thy massy shelves, more MSS. in folio than ever Aquinas left, and full as useful ! My mantle I bequeath among ye.

A fortnight has passed since the date of my first communication. At that period I was approaching to tranquility, but had not reached it. I boasted of a calm indeed, but it was comparative only. Something of the first flutter was left ; an unsettling sense of novelty ; the dazzle to weak eyes of unaccustomed light. I missed my old chains, forsooth, as if they had been some necessary part of my apparel. I was a poor Carthusian, from strict cellular discipline suddenly by some revolution returned upon the world. I am now as if I had never been other than my own master. It is natural to me to go where I please, to do what I please. I find myself at eleven o'clock in the day in Bond-street, and it seems to me that I have been sauntering there at that very hour for years past. I digress into Soho to explore a book-stall. Methinks I have been thirty years a collector. There is nothing strange nor new in it. I find myself before a fine picture in the morning. Was it ever otherwise ? What is become of Fish-street Hill ? Where is Fenchurch-street ? Stones of old Mincing-lane which I have worn with my daily pilgrimage for six and thirty years, to the footsteps of what toil-worn clerk are your everlasting flints now vocal ? I indent the gayer flags of Pall Mall. It is 'Change time, and I am strangely among the Elgin marbles. It was no hyperbole when I ventured to compare the change in

my condition to a passing into another world. Time stands still in a manner to me. I have lost all distinction of season. I do not know the day of the week, or of the month. Each day used to be individually felt by me in its reference to the foreign post days; in its distance from, or propinquity to, the next Sunday. I had my Wednesday feelings, my Saturday nights' sensations. The genius of each day was upon me distinctly during the whole of it, affecting my appetite, spirits, &c. The phantom of the next day, with the dreary five to follow, sate as a load upon my poor Sabbath recreations. What charm has washed that Ethiop white? What is gone of Black Monday? All days are the same. Sunday itself—that unfortunate failure of a holiday as it too often proved, what with my sense of its fugitiveness, and over-care to get the greatest quantity of pleasure out of it—is melted down into a week day. I can spare to go to church now, without grudging the huge cantle which it used to seem to cut out of the holiday. I have Time for everything. I can visit a sick friend. I can interrupt the man of much occupation when he is busiest. I can insult over him with an invitation to take a day's pleasure with me to Windsor this fine May-morning. It is Lucretian pleasure to behold the poor drudges, whom I have left behind in the world, carking and caring; like horses in a mill, drudging on in the same eternal round—and what is it all for? A man can never have too much Time to himself, nor too little to do. Had I a little son, I would christen him NOTHING-TO-DO; he should do nothing. Man, I verily believe, is out of his element as long as he is operative. I am altogether for the life contemplative. Will no kindly earthquake come and swallow up those accursed cotton mills? Take me that lumber of a desk there, and bowl it down

As low as to the fiends.

I am no longer * * * * * *, clerk to the Firm of, :. I am Retired Leisure. I am to be met with in m gardens. I am already come to be known by y vacant face and careless gesture, perambulating at fixed pace, nor with any settled purpose. I walk out; not to and from. They tell me, a certain *n dignitate* air, that has been buried so long with y other good parts, has begun to shoot forth in my rson. I grow into gentility perceptibly. When I ke up a newspaper, it is to read the state of the era. *Opus operatum est.* I have done all that came into this world to do. I have worked sk-work, and have the rest of the day to myself.





THE GENTEEL STYLE IN WRITING

IT is an ordinary criticism, that my Lord Shaftesbury, and Sir William Temple, are models of the genteel style in writing. We should prefer saying—of the lordly, and the gentlemanly. Nothing can be more unlike, than the inflated finical rhapsodies of Shaftesbury, and the plain natural chit-chat of Temple. The man of rank is discernible in both writers; but in the one it is only insinuated gracefully, in the other it stands out offensively. The peer seems to have written with his coronet on, and his Earl's mantle before him; the commoner in his

elbow chair and undress. What can be more pleasant than the way in which the retired statesman peeps out in his essays, penned by the latter in his delightful retreat at Shene? They scent of Nimeguen, and the Hague. Scarce an authority is quoted under an ambassador. Don Francisco de Melo, a "Portugal Envoy in England," tells him it was frequent in his country for men, spent with age and other decays, so as they could not hope for above a year or two of life, to ship themselves away in a Brazil fleet, and after their arrival there to go on a great length, sometimes of twenty or thirty years, or more, by the force of that vigour they recovered with that remove. "Whether such an effect (Temple beautifully adds) might grow from the air, or the fruits of that climate, or by approaching nearer the sun, which is the fountain of light and heat, when their natural heat was so far decayed: or whether the piecing out of an old man's life were worth the pains, I cannot tell: perhaps the play is not worth the candle."—Monsieur Pompone, "French ambassador in his (Sir William's) time at the Hague," certifies him, that in his life he had never heard of any man in France that arrived at a hundred years of age; a limitation of life which the old gentleman imputes to the excellence of their climate, giving them such a liveliness of temper and humour, as disposes them to more pleasures of all kinds than in other countries; and moralises upon the matter very sensibly. The "late Robert Earl of Leicester" furnishes him with a story of a Countess of Desmond, married out of England in Edward the Fourth's time, and who lived far in King James's reign. The "same noble person" gives him an account, how such a year, in the same reign, there went about the country a set of morrice-dancers, composed of ten men who danced, a Maid Marian, and a tabor and pipe; and how these twelve, one with



"These twelve, one with another, made up twelve hundred years."

another, made up twelve hundred years. "It was not so much (says Temple) that so many in one small county (Hertfordshire) should live to that age, as that they should be in vigour and in humour to travel and to dance." Monsieur Zulichem, one of his "colleagues at the Hague," informs him of a cure for the gout; which is confirmed by another "Envoy," Monsieur Serinchamps, in that town, who had tried it.—Old Prince Maurice of Nassau recommends to him the use of hammocks in that complaint; having been allured to sleep, while suffering under it himself, by the "constant motion or swinging of those airy beds." Count Egmont, and the Rhinegrave who "was killed last summer before Maestricht," impart to him their experiences.

But the rank of the writer is never more innocently disclosed, than where he takes for granted the compliments paid by foreigners to his fruit trees. For the taste and perfection of what we esteem the best, he can truly say, that the French, who have eaten his peaches and grapes at Shene in no very ill year, have generally concluded that the last are as good as

any they have eaten in France on this side Fontainbleau; and the first as good as any they have eat in Gascony. Italians have agreed his white figs to be as good as any of that sort in Italy, which is the earlier kind of white fig there; for in the later kind and the blue, we cannot come near the warm climates, no more than in the Frontignac or Muscat grape. His orange-trees too, are as large as any he saw when he was young in France, except those in Fontainbleau; or what he has seen since in the Low Countries, except some very old ones of the Prince of Orange's. Of grapes he had the honour of bringing over four sorts into England, which he enumerates, and supposes that they are all by this time pretty common among some gardeners in his neighbourhood, as well as several persons of quality; for he ever thought all things of this kind "the commoner they are made the better." The garden pedantry with which he asserts that 'tis to little purpose to plant any of the best fruits, as peaches or grapes, hardly, he doubts, beyond Northamptonshire at the furthest northwards; and praises the "Bishop of Munster at Cosevelt," for attempting nothing beyond cherries in that cold climate; is equally pleasant and in character. "I may perhaps" (he thus ends his sweet Garden Essay with a passage worthy of Cowley) "be allowed to know something of this trade, since I have so long allowed myself to be good for nothing else, which few men will do, or enjoy their gardens, without often looking abroad to see how other matters play, what motions in the state, and what invitations they may hope for into other scenes. For my own part, as the country life, and this part of it more particularly, were the inclination of my youth itself, so they are the pleasure of my age; and I can truly say that, among many great employments that have fallen to my share, I have

never asked or sought for any of them, but have often endeavoured to escape from them, into the ease and freedom of a private scene, where a man may go his own way and his own pace, in the common paths and circles of life. The measure of choosing well is whether a man likes what he has chosen, which I thank God has befallen me; and though among the follies of my life, building and planting have not been the least, and have cost me more than I have the confidence to own; yet they have been fully recompensed by the sweetness and satisfaction of this retreat, where, since my resolution taken of never entering again into any public employments, I have passed five years without ever once going to town, though I am almost in sight of it, and have a house there always ready to receive me. Nor has this been any sort of affectation, as some have thought it, but a mere want of desire or humour to make so small a remove; for when I am in this corner, I can truly say with Horace, *Me quoties reficit, &c.*

> "Me, when the cold Digentian stream revives,
> What does my friend believe I think or ask?
> Let me yet less possess, so I may live,
> Whate'er of life remains, unto myself.
> May I have books enough; and one year's store,
> Not to depend upon each doubtful hour:
> This is enough of mighty Jove to pray,
> Who, as he pleases, gives and takes away."

The writings of Temple are, in general, after this easy copy. On one occasion, indeed, his wit, which was mostly subordinate to nature and tenderness, has seduced him into a string of felicitous antitheses: which, it is obvious to remark, have been a model to Addison and succeeding essayists. "Who would not be covetous, and with reason," he says, "if health could be purchased with gold? who not ambitious, if it were at the command of power, or restored by

honour? but, alas! a white staff will not help gouty feet to walk better than a common cane; nor a blue riband bind up a wound so well as a fillet. The glitter of gold, or of diamonds, will but hurt sore eyes instead of curing them; and an aching head will be no more eased by wearing a crown, than a common night-cap." In a far better style, and more accordant with his own humour of plainness, are the concluding sentences of his "Discourse upon Poetry." Temple took a part in the controversy about the ancient and the modern learning; and, with that partiality so natural and so graceful in an old man, whose state engagements had left him little leisure to look into modern productions, while his retirement gave him occasion to look back upon the classic studies of his youth—decided in favour of the latter. "Certain it is," he says, "that, whether the fierceness of the Gothic humours, or noise of their perpetual wars, frighted it away, or that the unequal mixture of the modern languages would not bear it—the great heights and excellency both of poetry and music fell with the Roman learning and empire, and have never since recovered the admiration and applauses that before attended them. Yet, such as they are amongst us, they must be confessed to be the softest and sweetest, the most general and most innocent amusements of common time and life. They still find room in the courts of princes, and the cottages of shepherds. They serve to revive and animate the dead calm of poor and idle lives, and to allay or divert the violent passions and perturbations of the greatest and the busiest men. And both these effects are of equal use to human life; for the mind of man is like the sea, which is neither agreeable to the beholder nor the voyager, in a calm or in a storm, but is so to both when a little agitated by gentle gales; and so the mind, when moved by soft and

easy passions or affections. I know very well that many who pretend to be wise by the forms of being grave, are apt to despise both poetry and music, as toys and trifles too light for the use or entertainment of serious men. But whoever find themselves wholly insensible to their charms, would, I think, do well to keep their own counsel, for fear of reproaching their own temper, and bringing the goodness of their natures, if not of their understandings, into question. While this world lasts, I doubt not but the pleasure and request of these two entertainments will do so too; and happy those that content themselves with these, or any other so easy and so innocent, and do not trouble the world or other men, because they cannot be quiet themselves, though nobody hurts them." "When all is done (he concludes), human life is at the greatest and the best but like a froward child, that must be played with, and humoured a little, to keep it quiet till it falls asleep, and then the care is over."





BARBARA S———.

N the noon of the 14th of November, 1743 or
4, I forget which it was, just as the clock had
k one, Barbara S———, with her accustomed
tuality, ascended the long rambling staircase,
awkward interposed landing-places, which led
e office, or rather a sort of box with a desk in
hereat sat the then Treasurer of (what few of
eaders may remember) the Old Bath Theatre.

All over the island it was the custom, and remains so I believe to this day, for the players to receive their weekly stipend on the Saturday. It was not much that Barbara had to claim.

This little maid had just entered her eleventh year; but her important station at the theatre, as it seemed to her, with the benefits which she felt to accrue from her pious application of her small earnings, had given an air of womanhood to her steps and to her behaviour. You would have taken her to have been at least five years older.

Till latterly she had merely been employed in choruses, or where children were wanted to fill up the scene. But the manager, observing a diligence and adroitness in her above her age, had for some few months past intrusted to her the performance of whole parts. You may guess the self-consequence of the promoted Barbara. She had already drawn tears in young Arthur; had rallied Richard with infantine petulance in the Duke of York; and in her turn had rebuked that petulance when she was Prince of Wales. She would have done the elder child in Morton's pathetic after-piece to the life; but as yet the "Children in the Wood" was not.

Long after this little girl was grown an aged woman, I have seen some of these small parts, each making two or three pages at most, copied out in the rudest hand of the then prompter, who doubtless transcribed a little more carefully and fairly for the grown-up tragedy ladies of the establishment. But such as they were, blotted and scrawled, as for a child's use, she kept them all; and in the zenith of her after reputation it was a delightful sight to behold them bound up in costliest Morocco, each single—each small part making a *book*—with fine clasps, gilt-splashed, &c. She had conscientiously kept them as they had been delivered to her; not a blot had

been effaced or tampered with. They were precious to her for their affecting remembrancings. They were her principia, her rudiments; the elementary atoms; the little steps by which she pressed forward to perfection. "What," she would say, "could Indian rubber, or a pumice stone, have done for these darlings?"

I am in no hurry to begin my story—indeed I have little or none to tell—so I will just mention an observation of hers connected with that interesting time.

Not long before she died I had been discoursing with her on the quantity of real present emotion which a great tragic performer experiences during acting. I ventured to think, that though in the first instance such players must have possessed the feelings which they so powerfully called up in others, yet by frequent repetition those feelings must become deadened in great measure, and the performer trust to the memory of past emotion, rather than express a present one. She indignantly repelled the notion, that with a truly great tragedian the operation, by which such effects were produced upon an audience, could ever degrade itself into what was purely mechanical. With much delicacy, avoiding to instance in her *self*-experience, she told me, that so long ago as when she used to play the part of the Little Son to Mrs Porter's Isabella, (I think it was) when that impressive actress has been bending over her in some heart-rending colloquy, she has felt real hot tears come trickling from her, which (to use her powerful expression) have perfectly scalded her back.

I am not quite so sure that it was Mrs Porter; but it was some great actress of that day. The name is indifferent; but the fact of the scalding tears I most distinctly remember.

I was always fond of the society of players, and

am not sure that an impediment in my speech (which certainly kept me out of the pulpit) even more than certain personal disqualifications, which are often got over in that profession, did not prevent me at one time of life from adopting it. I have had the honour (I must ever call it) once to have been admitted to the tea-table of Miss Kelly. I have played at serious whist with Mr Liston. I have chatted with ever good-humoured Mrs Charles Kemble. I have conversed as friend to friend with her accomplished husband. I have been indulged with a classical conference with Macready; and with a sight of the Player-picture gallery, at Mr Matthews's, when the kind owner, to remunerate me for my love of the old actors (whom he loves so much), went over it with me, supplying to his capital collection, what alone the artist could not give them—voice; and their living motion. Old tones, half-faded, of Dodd, and Parsons, and Baddeley, have lived again for me at his bidding. Only Edwin he could not restore to me. I have supped with———; but I am growing a coxcomb.

As I was about to say—at the desk of the then treasurer of the old Bath theatre—not Diamond's—presented herself the little Barbara S———.

The parents of Barbara had been in reputable circumstances. The father had practised, I believe, as an apothecary in the town. But his practice, from causes which I feel my own infirmity too sensibly that way to arraign—or perhaps from that pure infelicity which accompanies some people in their walk through life, and which it is impossible to lay at the door of imprudence—was now reduced to nothing. They were in fact in the very teeth of starvation, when the manager, who knew and respected them in better days, took the little Barbara into his company.

At the period I commenced with, her slender earnings were the sole support of the family, including two younger sisters. I must throw a veil over some mortifying circumstances. Enough to say, that her Saturday's pittance was the only chance of a Sunday's (generally their only) meal of meat.

One thing I will only mention, that in some child's part, where in her theatrical character she was to sup off a roast fowl (O joy to Barbara!) some comic actor, who was for the night caterer for this dainty—in the misguided humour of his part, threw over the dish such a quantity of salt (O grief and pain of heart to Barbara!) that when she crammed a portion of it into her mouth, she was obliged sputteringly to reject it; and what with shame of her ill-acted part, and pain of real appetite at missing such a dainty, her little heart sobbed almost to breaking, till a flood of tears, which the well-fed spectators were totally unable to comprehend, mercifully relieved her.

This was the little starved, meritorious maid, who stood before old Ravenscroft, the treasurer, for her Saturday's payment.

Ravenscroft was a man, I have heard many old theatrical people beside herself say, of all men least calculated for a treasurer. He had no head for accounts, paid away at random, kept scarce any books, and summing up at the week's end, if he found himself a pound or so deficient, blest himself that it was no worse.

Now Barbara's weekly stipend was a bare half guinea.—By mistake he popped into her hand—a whole one.

Barbara tripped away.

She was entirely unconscious at first of the mistake: God knows, Ravenscroft would never have discovered it.

But when she got down to the first of those



"An unusual weight of metal."

uncouth landing-places, she became sensible of an unusual weight of metal pressing her little hand.

Now mark the dilemma.

She was by nature a good child. From her parents and those about her she had imbibed no contrary influence. But then they had taught her nothing. Poor men's smoky cabins are not always porticoes of moral philosophy. This little maid had no instinct to evil, but then she might be said to have no fixed principle. She had heard honesty commended, but never dreamed of its application to herself.

ıe thought of it as something which concerned rown-up people, men and women. She had never nown temptation, or thought of preparing resistance gainst it.

Her first impulse was to go back to the old reasurer, and explain to him his blunder. He was lready so confused with age, besides a natural vant of punctuality, that she would have had some ifficulty in making him understand it. She saw *that* n an instant. And then it was such a bit of money! nd then the image of a larger allowance of butcher's neat on their table next day came across her, till er little eyes glistened, and her mouth moistened. But then Mr Ravenscroft had always been so good-atured, had stood her friend behind the scenes, and ven recommended her promotion to some of her ittle parts. But again the old man was reputed to e worth a world of money. He was supposed to ave fifty pounds a year clear of the theatre. And hen came staring upon her the figures of her ittle stockingless and shoeless sisters. And when he looked at her own neat white cotton stockings, vhich her situation at the theatre had made it indis-ensable for her mother to provide for her, with ard straining and pinching from the family stock, nd thought how glad she should be to cover their oor feet with the same—and how then they could ccompany her to rehearsals, which they had hitherto een precluded from doing, by reason of their un-ashionable attire,—in these thoughts she reached the econd landing-place—the second, I mean, from the op—for there was still another left to traverse.

Now virtue support Barbara!

And that never-failing friend did step in—for at at moment a strength not her own, I have heard r say, was revealed to her—a reason above reason-g—and without her own agency, as it seemed (for

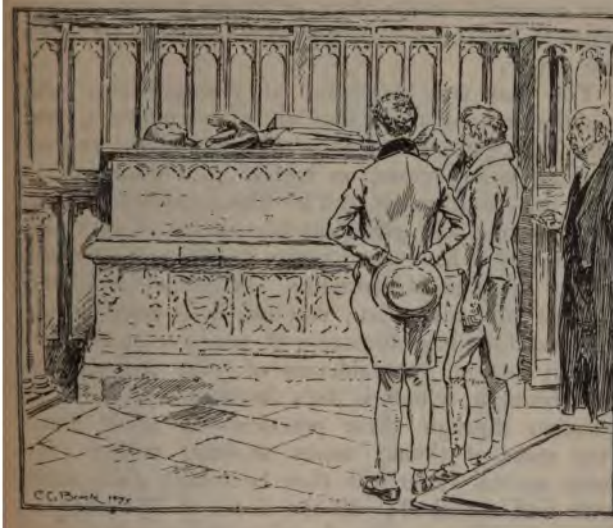
she never felt her feet to move), she found herself transported back to the individual desk she had just quitted, and her hand in the old hand of Ravenscroft, who in silence took back the refunded treasure, and who had been sitting (good man) insensible to the lapse of minutes, which to her were anxious ages; and from that moment a deep peace fell upon her heart, and she knew the quality of honesty.

A year or two's unrepining application to her profession brightened up the feet, and the prospects, of her little sisters, set the whole family upon their legs again, and released her from the difficulty of discussing moral dogmas upon a landing-place.

I have heard her say, that it was a surprise, not much short of mortification to her, to see the coolness with which the old man pocketed the difference, which had caused her such mortal throes.

This anecdote of herself I had in the year 1800, from the mouth of the late Mrs Crawford,[1] then sixty-seven years of age (she died soon after); and to her struggles upon this childish occasion I have sometimes ventured to think her indebted for that power of rending the heart in the representation of conflicting emotions, for which in after years she was considered as little inferior (if at all so in the part of Lady Randolph) even to Mrs Siddons.

[1] The maiden name of this lady was Street, which she changed by successive marriages for those of Dancer, Barry, and Crawford. She was Mrs Crawford, a third time a widow, when I knew her.



THE TOMBS IN THE ABBEY

IN A LETTER TO R—— S——, ESQ.

THOUGH in some points of doctrine, and perhaps of discipline, I am diffident of lending a perfect assent to that church which you have so worthily *historified*, yet may the ill time never come to me, when with a chilled heart, or a portion of irreverent sentiment, I shall enter her beautiful and time-hallowed Edifices. Judge then of my mortification when, after attending the choral anthems of last Wednesday at Westminster, and being desirous of renewing my acquaintance, after lapsed years, with the tombs and antiquities there, I found myself excluded; turned out like a dog, or some profane

person, into the common street, with feelings not very congenial to the place, or to the solemn service which I had been listening to. It was a jar after that music.

You had your education at Westminster; and doubtless among those dim aisles and cloisters, you must have gathered much of that devotional feeling in those young years, on which your purest mind feeds still—and may it feed! The antiquarian spirit, strong in you and gracefully blending ever with the religious, may have been sown in you among those wrecks of splendid mortality. You owe it to the place of your education; you owe it to your learned fondness for the architecture of your ancestors; you owe it to the venerableness of your ecclesiastical establishment, which is daily lessened and called in question through these practices—to speak aloud your sense of them; never to desist raising your voice against them, till they be totally done away with and abolished; till the doors of Westminster Abbey be no longer closed against the decent, though low-in-purse, enthusiast, or blameless devotee, who must commit an injury against his family economy, if he would be indulged with a bare admission within its walls. You owe it to the decencies, which you wish to see maintained in its impressive services, that our Cathedral be no longer an object of inspection to the poor at those times only, in which they must rob from their attendance on the worship every minute which they can bestow upon the fabric. In vain the public prints have taken up this subject, in vain such poor nameless writers as myself express their indignation. A word from you, Sir—a hint in your Journal—would be sufficient to fling open the doors of the Beautiful Temple again, as we can remember them when we were boys. At that time of life, what would the imaginative faculty (such as



ey must rob from
their attendance on the worship'

is) in both of us, have suffered, if the entrance to much reflection had been obstructed by the demand so much silver !—If we had scraped it up to gain occasional admission (as we certainly should have ne) would the sight of those old tombs have been impressive to us (while we had been weighing xiously prudence against sentiment) as when the tes stood open, as those of the adjacent Park; hen we could walk in at any time, as the mood ought us, for a shorter or longer time, as that ited? Is the being shown over a place the same silently for ourselves detecting the genius of it? no part of our beloved Abbey now can a person id entrance (out of service time) under the sum of *o shillings*. The rich and the great will smile at e anticlimax, presumed to lie in these two short ords. But you can tell them, Sir, how much quiet orth, how much capacity for enlarged feeling, how uch taste and genius, may coexist, especially in uth, with a purse incompetent to this demand.—A spected friend of ours, during his late visit to the tropolis, presented himself for admission to St ul's. At the same time a decently clothed man, th as decent a wife, and child, were bargaining for e same indulgence. The price was only twopence ch person. The poor but decent man hesitated, sirous to go in; but there were three of them, and turned away reluctantly. Perhaps he wished to ve seen the tomb of Nelson. Perhaps the Interior the Cathedral was his object. But in the state of finances, even sixpence might reasonably seem too ich. Tell the Aristocracy of the country (no man do it more impressively); instruct them of at value these insignificant pieces of money, these nims to their sight, may be to their humbler thren. Shame these Sellers out of the Temple. le not the suggestions of your better nature with

the pretext, that an indiscriminate admission would expose the Tombs to violation. Remember your boy-days. Did you ever see, or hear, of a mob in the Abbey, while it was free to all? Do the rabble come there, or trouble their heads about such speculations? It is all that you can do to drive them into your churches; they do not voluntarily offer themselves. They have, alas! no passion for antiquities; for tomb of king or prelate, sage or poet. If they had, they would be no longer the rabble.

For forty years that I have known the Fabric, the only well-attested charge of violation adduced, has been—a ridiculous dismemberment committed upon the effigy of that amiable spy, Major André. And is it for this—the wanton mischief of some schoolboy, fired perhaps with raw notions of Transatlantic Freedom—or the remote possibility of such a mischief occurring again, so easily to be prevented by stationing a constable within the walls, if the vergers are incompetent to the duty—is it upon such wretched pretences, that the people of England are made to pay a new Peter's Pence, so long abrogated; or must content themselves with contemplating the ragged Exterior of their Cathedral? The mischief was done about the time that you were a scholar there. Do you know anything about the unfortunate relic?—

What of the initials all over the Coronation Chair? I am afraid —



AMICUS REDIVIVUS

ere were ye, Nymphs, when the remorseless deep
s'd o'er the head of your loved Lycidas?

) not know when I have experienced a
anger sensation, than on seeing my old friend
, who had been paying me a morning visit a
ndays back, at my cottage at Islington, upon
leave, instead of turning down the right hand
y which he had entered—with staff in hand,
noon day, deliberately march right forwards
ıe midst of the stream that runs by us, and
disappear.
pectacle like this at dusk would have been
ng enough! but, in the broad open daylight,
ıess such an unreserved motion towards self-
:tion in a valued friend, took from me all
of speculation.
v I found my feet, I know not. Consciousness



"The stifle of conflicting judgments."

was quite gone. Some spirit, not my own, whirled me to the spot. I remember nothing but the silvery apparition of a good white head emerging, nigh which a staff (the hand unseen that wielded it) pointed upwards, as feeling for the skies. In a moment (if time was in that time) he was on my shoulders, and I—freighted with a load more precious than his who bore Anchises.

And here I cannot but do justice to the officious zeal of sundry passers by, who, albeit arriving a little too late to participate in the honours of the rescue, in philanthropic shoals came thronging to communi-

cate their advice as to the recovery; prescribing variously the application, or non-application, of salt, &c., to the person of the patient. Life meantime was ebbing fast away, amidst the stifle of conflicting judgments, when one, more sagacious than the rest, by a bright thought, proposed sending for the Doctor. Trite as the counsel was, and impossible, as one should think, to be missed on,—shall I confess? in this emergency, it was to me as if an Angel had spoken. Great previous exertions—and mine had not been inconsiderable—are commonly followed by a debility of purpose. This was a moment of irresolution.

Monoculus—for so, in default of catching his true name, I choose to designate the medical gentleman who now appeared—is a grave, middle-aged person, who, without having studied at the college, or truckled to the pedantry of a diploma, hath employed a great portion of his valuable time in experimental processes upon the bodies of unfortunate fellow-creatures, in whom the vital spark, to mere vulgar thinking, would seem extinct, and lost for ever. He omitteth no occasion of obtruding his services, from a case of common surfeit-suffocation to the ignobler obstructions, sometimes induced by a too wilful application of the plant *Cannabis* outwardly. But though he declineth not altogether these drier extinctions, his occupation tendeth for the most part to water-practice; for the convenience of which, he hath judiciously fixed his quarters near the grand repository of the stream mentioned, where, day and night, from his little watch tower, at the Middleton's-Head, he listeneth to detect the wrecks of drowned mortality—partly, as he saith, to be upon the spot—and partly, because the liquids which he useth to prescribe to himself and his patients, on these distressing occasions, are ordinarily more conveniently to be found at these common hostelries, than in the

shops and phials of the apothecaries. His ear hath arrived to such finesse by practice, that it is reported he can distinguish a plunge at a half furlong distance; and can tell, if it be casual or deliberate. He weareth a medal, suspended over a suit, originally of a sad brown, but which, by time, and frequency of nightly divings, has been dinged into a true professional sable. He passeth by the name of Doctor, and is remarkable for wanting his left eye. His remedy—after a sufficient application of warm blankets, friction, &c., is a simple tumbler, or more, of the purest Cognac, with water, made as hot as the convalescent can bear it. Where he findeth, as in the case of my friend, a squeamish subject, he condescendeth to be the taster; and showeth, by his own example, the innocuous nature of the prescription. Nothing can be more kind or encouraging than this procedure. It addeth confidence to the patient, to see his medical adviser go hand in hand with himself in the remedy. When the doctor swalloweth his own draught, what peevish invalid can refuse to pledge him in the potion? In fine, MONOCULUS is a humane, sensible man, who, for a slender pittance, scarce enough to sustain life, is content to wear it out in the endeavour to save the lives of others—his pretensions so moderate, that with difficulty I could press a crown upon him, for the price of restoring the existence of such an invaluable creature to society as G. D.

It was pleasant to observe the effect of the subsiding alarm upon the nerves of the dear absentee. It seemed to have given a shake to memory, calling up notice after notice, of all the providential deliverances he had experienced in the course of his long and innocent life. Sitting up in my couch—my couch which, naked and void of furniture hitherto, for the salutary repose which it administered, shall

be honoured with costly valance, at some price, and henceforth be a state-bed at Colebrook,—he discoursed of marvellous escapes—by carelessness of nurses—by pails of gelid, and kettles of the boiling element, in infancy—by orchard pranks, and snapping twigs, in schoolboy frolics—by descent of tiles at Trumpington, and of heavier tomes at Pembroke—by studious watchings, inducing frightful vigilance—by want, and the fear of want, and all the sore throbbings of the learned head.—Anon, he would burst into little fragments of chanting—of songs long ago—ends of deliverance hymns, not remembered before since childhood, but coming up now, when his heart was made tender as a child's—for the *tremor cordis*, in the retrospect of a recent deliverance, as in a case of impending danger, acting upon an innocent heart, will produce a self-tenderness, which we should do ill to christen cowardice; and Shakspeare, in the latter crisis, has made his good Sir Hugh to remember the sitting by Babylon, and to mutter of shallow rivers.

Waters of Sir Hugh Middleton—what a spark you were like to have extinguished for ever! Your salubrious streams to this City, for now near two centuries, would hardly have atoned for what you were in a moment washing away. Mockery of a river—liquid artifice—wretched conduit! henceforth rank with canals, and sluggish aqueducts. Was it for this, that, smit in boyhood with the explorations of that Abyssinian traveller, I paced the vales of Amwell to explore your tributary springs, to trace your salutary waters sparkling through green Hertfordshire, and cultured Enfield parks?—Ye have no swans—no Naiads—no river God—or did the benevolent hoary aspect of my friend tempt ye to suck him in, that ye also might have the tutelary genius of your waters?

Had he been drowned in Cam there would have been some consonancy in it; but what willows had ye to wave and rustle over his moist sepulture?—or, having no *name*, besides that unmeaning assumption of *eternal novity*, did ye think to get one by the noble prize, and henceforth to be termed the STREAM DYÈRIAN?

> And could such spacious virtue find a grave
> Beneath the imposthumed bubble of a wave?

I protest, George, you shall not venture out again—no, not by daylight—without a sufficient pair of spectacles—in your musing moods especially. Your absence of mind we have borne, till your presence of body came to be called in question by it. You shall not go wandering into Euripus with Aristotle, if we can help it. Fie, man, to turn dipper at your years, after your many tracts in favour of sprinkling only!

I have nothing but water in my head o'nights since this frightful accident. Sometimes I am with Clarence in his dream. At others, I behold Christian beginning to sink, and crying out to his good brother Hopeful (that is, to me), "I sink in deep waters; the billows go over my head, all the waves go over me. Selah." Then I have before me Palinurus, just letting go the steerage. I cry out too late to save. Next follow—a mournful procession—*suicidal faces*, saved against their wills from drowning; dolefully trailing a length of reluctant gratefulness, with ropy weeds pendant from locks of watchet hue—constrained Lazari—Pluto's half-subjects—stolen fees from the grave—bilking Charon of his fare. At their head Arion—or is it G. D.?—in his singing garments marcheth singly, with harp in hand, and votive garland, which Machaon (or Dr Hawes) snatcheth straight, intending to suspend it to the stern God of Sea. Then follow dismal streams of

Lethe, in which the half-drenched on earth are constrained to drown downright, by wharfs where Ophelia twice acts her muddy death.

And, doubtless, there is some notice in that invisible world, when one of us approacheth (as my friend did so lately) to their inexorable precincts. When a soul knocks once, twice, at death's door, the sensation aroused within the palace must be considerable; and the grim Feature, by modern science so often dispossessed of his prey, must have learnt by this time to pity Tantalus.

A pulse assuredly was felt along the line of the Elysian shades, when the near arrival of G. D. was announced by no equivocal indications. From their seats of Asphodel arose the gentler and the graver ghosts—poet or historian—of Grecian or of Roman lore—to crown with unfading chaplets the half-finished love-labours of their unwearied scholiast. Him Markland expected—him Tyrwhitt hoped to encounter—him the sweet lyrist of Peter House, whom he had barely seen upon earth,[1] with newest airs prepared to greet ——; and, patron of the gentle Christ's boy,—who should have been his patron through life—the mild Askew, with longing aspirations leaned foremost from his venerable Æsculapian chair, to welcome into that happy company the matured virtues of the man, whose tender scions in the boy he himself upon earth had so prophetically fed and watered.

[1] GRAIUM *tantum vidit*.



SOME SONNETS OF SIR PHILIP SYDNEY

SYDNEY'S Sonnets—I speak of the best of them—are among the very best of their sort. They fall below the plain moral dignity, the sanctity, and high yet modest spirit of self-approval, of Milton, in his compositions of a similar structure. They are in a truth what Milton, censuring the Arcadia, says of

that work (to which they are a sort of after-tune or application), "vain and amatorious" enough, yet the things in their kind (as he confesses to be true of the romance) may be "full of worth and wit." They savour of the Courtier, it must be allowed, and not of the Commonwealths-man. But Milton was a Courtier when he wrote the Masque at Ludlow Castle, and still more a Courtier when he composed the Arcades. When the national struggle was to begin, he becomingly cast these vanities behind him; and if the order of time had thrown Sir Philip upon the crisis which preceded the Revolution, there is no reason why he should not have acted the same part in that emergency, which has glorified the name of a later Sydney. He did not want for plainness or boldness of spirit. His letter on the French match may testify, he could speak his mind freely to Princes. The times did not call him to the scaffold.

The Sonnets which we oftenest call to mind of Milton were the compositions of his maturest years. Those of Sydney, which I am about to produce, were written in the very hey-day of his blood. They are stuck full of amorous fancies—far-fetched conceits, befitting his occupation; for True Love thinks no labour to send out Thoughts upon the vast, and more than Indian voyages, to bring home rich pearls, outlandish wealth, gums, jewels, spicery, to sacrifice in self-depreciating similitudes, as shadows of true amiabilities in the Beloved. We must be Lovers—or at least the cooling touch of time, the *circum præcordia frigus*, must not have so damped our faculties, as to take away our recollection that we were once so—before we can duly appreciate the glorious vanities, and graceful hyperboles, of the passion. The images which lie before our feet (though by some accounted the only natural) are least natural for the high Sydnean love to express its fancies by. They may

serve for the loves of Tibullus, or the dear Author of the Schoolmistress; for passions that creep and whine in Elegies and Pastoral Ballads. I am sure Milton never loved at this rate. I am afraid some of his addresses (*ad Leonoram* I mean) have rather erred on the farther side; and that the poet came not much short of a religious indecorum, when he could thus apostrophise a singing-girl:—

> Angelus unicuique suus (sic credite, gentes)
> Obtigit æthereis ales ab ordinibus.
> Quid mirum, Leonora, tibi si gloria major,
> Nam tua præsentem vox sonat ipsa Deum?
> Aut Deus, aut vacui certè mens tertia cœli,
> Per tua secretò guttura serpit agens;
> Serpit agens, facilisque docet mortalia corda
> Sensim immortali assuescere posse sono.
> QUOD SI CUNCTA QUIDEM DEUS EST, PER CUNCTAQUE FUSUS,
> IN TE UNA LOQUITUR, CÆTERA MUTUS HABET.

This is loving in a strange fashion: and it requires some candour of construction (besides the slight darkening of a dead language) to cast a veil over the ugly appearance of something very like blasphemy in the last two verses. I think the Lover would have been staggered, if he had gone about to express the same thought in English. I am sure, Sydney has no flights like this. His extravaganzas do not strike at the sky, though he takes leave to adopt the pale Dian into a fellowship with his mortal passions.

I.

> With how sad steps, O Moon, thou climb'st the skies;
> How silently; and with how wan a face!
> What! may it be, that even in heavenly place
> That busy Archer his sharp arrows tries?
> Sure, if that long-with-love-acquainted eyes
> Can judge of love, thou feel'st a lover's case;
> I read it in thy looks; thy languisht grace
> To me, that feel the like, thy state descries
> Then, even of fellowship, O Moon, tell me,
> Is constant love deem'd there but want of wit?

Are beauties there as proud as here they be?
Do they above love to be loved, and yet
Those lovers scorn, whom that love doth possess?
Do they call *virtue* there—*ungratefulness?*

The last line of this poem is a little obscured by nsposition. He means, Do they call ungratefuls there a virtue?

II.

Come, Sleep, O Sleep, the certain knot of peace,
The baiting place of wit, the balm of woe,
The poor man's wealth, the prisoner's release,
The indifferent judge between the high and low;
With shield of proof shield me from out the prease[1]
Of those fierce darts despair at me doth throw;
O make in me those civil wars to cease:
I will good tribute pay, if thou do so.
Take thou of me sweet pillows, sweetest bed;
A chamber deaf to noise, and blind to light;
A rosy garland, and a weary head.
And if these things, as being thine by right,
Move not thy heavy grace, thou shalt in me,
Livelier than elsewhere, STELLA's image see.

III.

The curious wits, seeing dull pensiveness
Bewray itself in my long-settled eyes,
Whence those same fumes of melancholy rise,
With idle pains, and missing aim, do guess.
Some, that know how my spring I did address,
Deem that my Muse some fruit of knowledge plies;
Others, because the Prince my service tries,
Think, that I think state errors to redress;
But harder judges judge, ambition's rage,
Scourge of itself, still climbing slippery place,
Holds my young brain captiv'd in golden cage.
O fools, or over-wise! alas, the race
Of all my thoughts hath neither stop nor start,
But only STELLA's eyes, and STELLA's heart.

IV.

Because I oft in dark abstracted guise
Seem most alone in greatest company,
With dearth of words, or answers quite awry,
To them that would make speech of speech arise;
They deem, and of their doom the rumour flies,
That poison foul of bubbling *Pride* doth lie

[1] Press.

So in my swelling breast, that only I
Fawn on myself, and others do despise;
Yet *Pride*, I think, doth not my soul possess,
Which looks too oft in his unflattering glass:
But one worse fault—*Ambition*—I confess,
That makes me oft my best friends overpass,
Unseen, unheard—while Thought to highest place,
Bends all his powers, even unto STELLA's grace.

V.

Having this day, my horse, my hand, my lance,
Guided so well that I obtained the prize,
Both by the judgment of the English eyes,
And of some sent from that *sweet enemy*,—France;
Horsemen my skill in horsemanship advance;
Townsfolk my strength; a daintier judge applies
His praise to sleight, which from good use doth rise;
Some lucky wits impute it but to chance;
Others, because of both sides I do take
My blood from them, who did excel in this,
Think Nature me a man of arms did make.
How far they shot awry! the true cause is,
STELLA looked on, and from her heavenly face
Sent forth the beams which made so fair my race.

VI.

In martial sports I had my cunning tried,
And yet to break more staves did me address,
While with the people's shouts (I must confess)
Youth, luck, and praise, even fill'd my veins with pride;
When Cupid having me (his slave) descried
In Mars's livery, prancing in the press,
"What now, Sir Fool!" said he: "I would no less
Look here, I say." I look'd, and STELLA spied,
Who hard by made a window send forth light.
My heart then quak'd, then dazzled were mine eyes;
One hand forgot to rule, th' other to fight;
Nor trumpet's sound I heard, nor friendly cries.
My foe came on, and beat the air for me—
Till that her blush made me my shame to see.

VII.

No more, my dear, no more these counsels try;
O give my passions leave to run their race;
Let Fortune lay on me her worst disgrace;
Let folk o'ercharged with brain against me cry;
Let clouds bedim my face, break in mine eye;
Let me no steps, but of lost labour, trace;

Let all the earth with scorn recount my case—
But do not will me from my love to fly.
I do not envy Aristotle's wit,
Nor do aspire to Cæsar's bleeding fame;
Nor aught do care, though some above me sit;
Nor hope, nor wish, another course to frame,
But that which once may win thy cruel heart:
Thou art my wit, and thou my virtue art.

VIII.

Love still a boy, and oft a wanton, is,
School'd only by his mother's tender eye;
What wonder then, if he his lesson miss,
When for so soft a rod dear play he try?
And yet my Star, because a sugar'd kiss
In sport I suck'd, while she asleep did lie,
Doth lour, nay chide, nay threat, for only this.
Sweet, it was saucy Love, not humble I.
But no 'scuse serves; she makes her wrath appear
In beauty's throne—see now who dares come near
Those scarlet judges, threat'ning bloody pain?
O heav'nly Fool, thy most kiss-worthy face
Anger invests with such a lovely grace,
That anger's self I needs must kiss again.

IX.

I never drank of Aganippe well,
Nor ever did in shade of Tempe sit,
And Muses scorn with vulgar brains to dwell;
Poor lay-man I, for sacred rites unfit.
Some do I hear of Poet's fury tell,
But (God wot) wot not what they mean by it;
And this I swear by blackest brook of hell,
I am no pick-purse of another's wit.
How falls it then, that with so smooth an ease
My thoughts I speak, and what I speak doth flow
In verse, and that my verse best wits doth please?
Guess me the cause—what is it thus?—fye, no.
Or so?—much less. How then? sure thus it is,
My lips are sweet, inspired with Stella's kiss.

X.

Of all the kings that ever here did reign,
Edward, named Fourth, as first in praise I name,
Not for his fair outside, nor well-lined brain—
Although less gifts imp feathers oft on Fame.
Nor that he could, young-wise, wise-valiant, frame
His sire's revenge, join'd with a kingdom's gain;

And, gain'd by Mars could yet mad Mars so tame,
That Balance weigh'd what Sword did late obtain.
Nor that he made the Floure-de-luce so 'fraid,
Though strongly hedged of bloody Lions' paws,
That witty Lewis to him a tribute paid.
Nor this, nor that, nor any such small cause—
But only, for this worthy knight durst prove
To lose his crown rather than fail his love.

XI.

O happy Thames, that didst my STELLA bear,
I saw thyself, with many a smiling line
Upon thy cheerful face, Joy's livery wear,
While those fair planets on thy streams did shine;
The boat for joy could not to dance forbear,
While wanton winds, with beauty so divine
Ravish'd, stay'd not, till in her golden hair
They did themselves (O sweetest prison) twine.
And fain those Æol's youth there would their stay
Have made; but, forced by nature still to fly,
First did with puffing kiss those locks display.
She, so dishevell'd, blush'd; from window I
With sight thereof cried out, O fair disgrace,
Let honour's self to thee grant highest place!

XII.

Highway, since you my chief Parnassus be;
And that my Muse, to some ears not unsweet,
Tempers her words to trampling horses' feet,
More soft than to a chamber melody;
Now blessed You bear onward blessed Me
To Her, where I my heart safe left shall meet,
My Muse and I must you of duty greet
With thanks and wishes, wishing thankfully,
Be you still fair, honour'd by public heed,
By no encroachment wrong'd, nor time forgot;
Nor blam'd for blood, nor shamed for sinful deed.
And that you know, I envy you no lot
Of highest wish, I wish you so much bliss,
Hundreds of years you STELLA's feet may kiss.

Of the foregoing, the first, the second, and the last sonnet, are my favourites. But the general beauty of them all is, that they are so perfectly characteristical. The spirit of "learning and of chivalry,"—of which union, Spenser has entitled Sydney to have been the

president,"—shines through them. I confess I can e nothing of the "jejune" or "frigid" in them; uch less of the "stiff" and "cumbrous"—which I ve sometimes heard objected to the Arcadia. The rse runs off swiftly and gallantly. It might have en tuned to the trumpet; or tempered (as himself presses it) to "trampling horses' feet." They ound in felicitous phrases—

> O heav'nly Fool, thy most kiss-worthy face—
> *8th Sonnet.*
>
> ——Sweet pillows, sweetest bed;
> A chamber deaf to noise, and blind to light;
> A rosy garland, and a weary head.
> *2nd Sonnet.*
>
> ——That sweet enemy,—France—
> *5th Sonnet.*

But they are not rich in words only, in vague and nlocalised feelings—the failing too much of some oetry of the present day—they are full, material, nd circumstantiated. Time and place appropriates very one of them. It is not a fever of passion asting itself upon a thin diet of dainty words, but transcendent passion pervading and illuminating tion, pursuits, studies, feats of arms, the opinions contemporaries and his judgment of them. An storical thread runs through them, which almost fixes a date to them; marks the *when* and *where* ey were written.

I have dwelt the longer upon what I conceive the erit of these poems, because I have been hurt by e wantonness (I wish I could treat it by a gentler ame) with which W. H. takes every occasion of sulting the memory of Sir Philip Sydney. But the cisions of the Author of Table Talk, &c. (most ofound and subtle where they are, as for the most rt, just) are more safely to be relied upon, on bjects and authors he has a partiality for, than on ch as he has conceived an accidental prejudice

against. Milton wrote Sonnets, and was a king-hater; and it was congenial perhaps to sacrifice a courtier to a patriot. But I was unwilling to lose a *fine idea* from my mind. The noble images, passions, sentiments, and poetical delicacies of character, scattered all over the Arcadia (spite of some stiffness and encumberment), justify to me the character which his contemporaries have left us of the writer. I cannot think with the Critic, that Sir Philip Sydney was that *opprobrious thing* which a foolish nobleman in his insolent hostility chose to term him. I call to mind the epitaph made on him, to guide me to juster thoughts of him; and I repose upon the beautiful lines in the "Friend's Passion for his Astrophel," printed with the Elegies of Spenser and others.

You knew—who knew not Astrophel?
(That I should live to say I knew,
And have not in possession still!)—
Things known permit me to renew—
 Of him you know his merit such,
 I cannot say—you hear—too much.

Within these woods of Arcady
He chief delight and pleasure took;
And on the mountain Partheny,
Upon the crystal liquid brook,
 The Muses met him every day,
 That taught him sing, to write, and say.

When he descended down the mount,
His personage seemed most divine:
A thousand graces one might count
Upon his lovely cheerful eyne.
 To hear him speak, and sweetly smile,
 You were in Paradise the while.

A sweet attractive kind of grace;
A full assurance given by looks;
Continual comfort in a face,
The lineaments of Gospel books—
 I trow that count'nance cannot lye,
 Whose thoughts are legible in the eye.

* * * * *

Above all others this is he,
Which erst approved in his song
That love and honour might agree,
And that pure love will do no wrong.
 Sweet saints, it is no sin or blame
 To love a man of virtuous name.

Did never love so sweetly breathe
In any mortal breast before:
Did never Muse inspire beneath
A Poet's brain a finer store.
 He wrote of Love with high conceit,
 And Beauty rear'd above her height.

Or let any one read the deeper sorrows (grief running into rage) in the Poem,—the last in the collection accompanying the above,—which from internal testimony I believe to be Lord Brooke's,—beginning with "Silence augmenteth grief,"—and then seriously ask himself, whether the subject of such absorbing and confounding regrets could have been *that thing* which Lord Oxford termed him.





NEWSPAPERS THIRTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

DAN STUART once told us that he did not remember that he ever deliberately walked into the Exhibition at Somerset House in his life. He might occasionally have escorted a party of ladies across the way that were going in; but he never went in of his own head. Yet the office of the Morning Post newspaper stood then just where it does now—we are carrying you back, Reader, some thirty years or more—with its gilt-globe-topt front facing that emporium of our artists' grand Annual Exposure. We sometimes wish that we had observed the same abstinence with Daniel.

A word or two of D. S. He ever appeared to us one of the finest tempered of Editors. Perry, of the Morning Chronicle, was equally pleasant, with a dash, no slight one either, of the courtier. S. was frank, plain, and English all over. We have worked for both these gentlemen.

It is soothing to contemplate the head of the

Ganges; to trace the first little bubblings of a mighty river;

> With holy reverence to approach the rocks,
> Whence glide the streams renowned in ancient song.

Fired with a perusal of the Abyssinian Pilgrim's exploratory ramblings after the cradle of the infant Nilus, we well remember on one fine summer holyday (a "whole day's leave" we called it at Christ's Hospital) sallying forth at rise of sun, not very well provisioned either for such an undertaking, to trace the current of the New River—Middletonian stream! —to its scaturient source, as we had read, in meadows by fair Amwell. Gallantly did we commence our solitary quest—for it was essential to the dignity of a DISCOVERY, that no eye of schoolboy, save our own, should beam on the detection. By flowery spots, and verdant lanes skirting Hornsey, Hope trained us on in many a baffling turn; endless, hopeless meanders, as it seemed; or as if the jealous waters had *dodged* us, reluctant to have the humble spot of their nativity revealed; till spent, and nigh famished, before set of the same sun, we sate down somewhere by Bowes Farm, near Tottenham, with a tithe of our proposed labours only yet accomplished; sorely convinced in spirit, that that Brucian enterprise was as yet too arduous for our young shoulders.

Not more refreshing to the thirsty curiosity of the traveller is the tracing of some mighty waters up to their shallow fontlet, than it is to a pleased and candid reader to go back to the inexperienced essays, the first callow flights in authorship, of some established name in literature; from the Gnat which preluded to the Æneid, to the Duck which Samuel Johnson trod on.

In those days every Morning Paper, as an essential retainer to its establishment, kept an author, who

was bound to furnish daily a quantum of witty paragraphs. Sixpence a joke—and it was thought pretty high too—was Dan Stuart's settled remuneration in these cases. The chat of the day, scandal, but, above all, *dress*, furnished the material. The length of no paragraph was to exceed seven lines. Shorter they might be, but they must be poignant.

A fashion of *flesh*, or rather *pink*-coloured hose for the ladies, luckily coming up at the juncture, when we were on our probation for the place of Chief Jester to S.'s Paper, established our reputation in that line. We were pronounced a "capital hand." O the conceits which we varied upon *red* in all its prismatic differences! from the trite and obvious flower of Cytherea, to the flaming costume of the lady that has her sitting upon "many waters." Then there was the collateral topic of ankles. What an occasion to a truly chaste writer, like ourself, of touching that nice brink, and yet never tumbling over it, of a seemingly ever approximating something "not quite proper;" while, like a skilful posture-master, balancing betwixt decorums and their opposites, he keeps the line, from which a hair's-breadth deviation is destruction; hovering in the confines of light and darkness, or where "both seem either;" a hazy uncertain delicacy; Autolycus-like in the Play, still putting off his expectant auditory with "Whoop, do me no harm, good man!" But, above all, that conceit arrided us most at that time, and still tickles our midriff to remember, where allusively to the flight of Astræa—*ultima Cælestûm terras reliquit*—we pronounced—in reference to the stockings still—that MODESTY, TAKING HER FINAL LEAVE OF MORTALS, HER LAST BLUSH WAS VISIBLE IN HER ASCENT TO THE HEAVENS BY THE TRACT OF THE GLOWING INSTEP. This might be called the crowning conceit; and was esteemed tolerable writing in those days.

But the fashion of jokes, with all other things, passes away; as did the transient mode which had so favoured us. The ankles of our fair friends in a few weeks began to reassume their whiteness, and left us scarce a leg to stand upon. Other female whims followed, but none, methought, so pregnant, so invitatory of shrewd conceits, and more than single meanings.

Somebody has said, that to swallow six cross-buns daily consecutively for a fortnight, would surfeit the stoutest digestion. But to have to furnish as many jokes daily, and that not for a fortnight, but for a long twelvemonth, as we were constrained to do, was a little harder exaction. "Man goeth forth to his work until the evening"—from a reasonable hour in the morning, we presume it was meant. Now, as our main occupation took us up from eight till five every day in the City; and as our evening hours, at that time of life, had generally to do with anything rather than business, it follows, that the only time we could spare for this manufactory of jokes—our supplementary livelihood, that supplied us in every want beyond mere bread and cheese—was exactly that part of the day which (as we have heard of No Man's Land) may be fitly denominated No Man's Time; that is, no time in which a man ought to be up, and awake, in. To speak more plainly, it is that time, of an hour, or an hour and a half's duration, in which a man, whose occasions call him up so preposterously, has to wait for his breakfast.

O those headaches at dawn of day, when at five, or half-past five in summer, and not much later in the dark seasons, we were compelled to rise, having been perhaps not above four hours in bed—(for we were no go-to-beds with the lamb, though we anticipated the lark oftimes in her rising—we liked a parting cup at midnight, as all young men did before these effemi-

nate times, and to have our friends about us—we were not constellated under Aquarius, that watery sign, and therefore incapable of Bacchus, cold, washy, bloodless—we were none of your Basilian water-sponges, nor had taken our degrees at Mount Ague—we were right toping Capulets, jolly companions, we and they)—but to have to get up, as we said before, curtailed of half our fair sleep, fasting, with only a dim vista of refreshing Bohea in the distance—to be necessitated to rouse ourselves at the detestable rap of an old hag of a domestic, who seemed to take a diabolical pleasure in her announcement that it was "time to rise;" and whose chappy knuckles we have often yearned to amputate, and string them up at our chamber-door, to be a terror to all such unseasonable rest-breakers in future——

"Facil" and sweet, as Virgil sings, had been the "descending" of the over-night, balmy the first sinking of the heavy head upon the pillow; but to get up, as he goes on to say,

—revocare gradus, superasque evadere ad auras—

and to get up moreover to make jokes with malice prepended — there was the "labour," there the "work."

No Egyptian taskmaster ever devised a slavery like to that, our slavery. No fractious operants ever turned out for half the tyranny, which this necessity exercised upon us. Half a dozen jests in a day (bating Sundays too), why, it seems nothing! We make twice the number every day in our lives as a matter of course, and claim no Sabbatical exemptions. But then they come into our head. But when the head has to go out to them—when the mountain must go to Mahomet—

Reader, try it for once, only for one short twelvemonth.



"Pink-coloured hose"



It was not every week that a fashion of pink stockings came up; but mostly instead of it, some rugged, intractable subject; some topic impossible to be contorted into the risible; some feature, upon which no smile could play; some flint, from which no process of ingenuity could procure a distillation. There they lay; there your appointed tale of brick-making was set before you, which you must finish, with or without straw, as it happened. The craving Dragon —*the Public*—like him in Bel's temple—must be fed; it expected its daily rations; and Daniel, and ourselves, to do us justice, did the best we could on this side bursting him.

While we were wringing out coy sprightlinesses for the Post, and writhing under the toil of what is called "easy writing," Bob Allen, our *quondam* schoolfellow, was tapping his impracticable brains in a like service for the "Oracle." Not that Robert troubled himself much about wit. If his paragraphs had a sprightly air about them, it was sufficient. He carried this nonchalance so far at last, that a matter of intelligence, and that no very important one, was not seldom palmed upon his employers for a good jest; for example sake—"*Walking yesterday morning casually down Snow Hill, who should we meet but Mr Deputy Humphreys! we rejoice to add that the worthy Deputy appeared to enjoy a good state of health. We do not ever remember to have seen him look better.*" This gentleman so surprisingly met upon Snow Hill, from some peculiarities in gait or gesture, was a constant butt for mirth to the small paragraph-mongers of the day; and our friend thought that he might have his fling at him with the rest. We met A. in Holborn shortly after this extraordinary rencounter, which he told with tears of satisfaction in his eyes, and chuckling at the anticipated effects of its announcement next day in the paper. We did not quite



"The detestable hag of a domestic."

comprehend where the wit of it lay at the time; nor was it easy to be detected, when the thing came out, advantaged by type and letterpress. He had better have met any thing that morning than a Common Council Man. His services were shortly after dispensed with, on the plea that his paragraphs of late had been deficient in point. The one in question, it

must be owned, had an air, in the opening especially, proper to awaken curiosity; and the sentiment, or moral, wears the aspect of humanity and good neighbourly feeling. But somehow the conclusion was not judged altogether to answer to the magnificent promise of the premises. We traced our friend's pen afterwards in the "True Briton," the "Star," the "Traveller,"—from all which he was successively dismissed, the Proprietors having "no further occasion for his services." Nothing was easier than to detect him. When wit failed, or topics ran low, there constantly appeared the following—"*It is not generally known that the three Blue Balls at the Pawnbrokers' shops are the ancient arms of Lombardy. The Lombards were the first money-brokers in Europe.*" Bob has done more to set the public right on this important point of blazonry, than the whole College of Heralds.

The appointment of a regular wit has long ceased to be a part of the economy of a Morning Paper. Editors find their own jokes, or do as well without them. Parson Este, and Topham, brought up the set custom of "witty paragraphs" first in the "World." Boaden was a reigning paragraphist in his day, and succeeded poor Allen in the Oracle. But, as we said, the fashion of jokes passes away; and it would be difficult to discover in the Biographer of Mrs Siddons, any traces of that vivacity and fancy which charmed the whole town at the commencement of the present century. Even the prelusive delicacies of the present writer—the curt "Astræan allusion"—would be thought pedantic and out of date, in these days.

From the office of the Morning Post (for we may as well exhaust our Newspaper Reminiscences at once) by change of property in the paper, we were transferred, mortifying exchange! to the office of the Albion Newspaper, late Rackstrow's Museum, in

Fleet Street. What a transition—from a handsome apartment, from rosewood desks, and silver inkstands, to an office—no office, but a *den* rather, but just redeemed from the occupation of dead monsters, of which it seemed redolent—from the centre of loyalty and fashion, to a focus of vulgarity and sedition! Here in murky closet, inadequate from its square contents to the receipt of the two bodies of Editor, and humble paragraph-maker, together at one time, sat in the discharge of his new Editorial functions (the "Bigod" of Elia) the redoubted John Fenwick.

F., without a guinea in his pocket, and having left not many in the pockets of his friends whom he might command, had purchased (on tick doubtless) the whole and sole Editorship, Proprietorship, with all the rights and titles (such as they were worth) of the Albion, from one Lovell; of whom we know nothing, save that he had stood in the pillory for a libel on the Prince of Wales. With this hopeless concern—for it had been sinking ever since its commencement, and could now reckon upon not more than a hundred subscribers—F. resolutely determined upon pulling down the Government in the first instance, and making both our fortunes by way of corollary. For seven weeks and more did this infatuated Democrat go about borrowing seven-shilling pieces, and lesser coin, to meet the daily demands of the Stamp Office, which allowed no credit to publications of that side in politics. An outcast from politer bread, we attached our small talents to the forlorn fortunes of our friend. Our occupation now was to write treason.

Recollections of feelings—which were all that now remained from our first boyish heats kindled by the French Revolution, when, if we were misled, we erred in the company of some, who are accounted very good men now—rather than any tendency at

; time to Republican doctrines—assisted us in ıming a style of writing, while the paper lasted, ısonant in no very under tone—to the right earnest aticism of F. Our cue was now to insinuate, her than recommend, possible abdications. Blocks, :s, Whitehall tribunals, were covered with flowers so cunning a periphrasis—as Mr Bayes says, never ning the *thing* directly—that the keen eye of an torney General was insufficient to detect the lurk- ; snake among them. There were times, indeed, ıen we sighed for our more gentleman-like occu- ion under Stuart. But with change of masters it ever change of service. Already one paragraph, l another, as we learned afterwards from a gentle- ın at the Treasury, had begun to be marked at that ice, with a view of its being submitted at least to : attention of the proper Law Officers—when an lucky, or rather lucky epigram from our pen, aimed Sir J——s M——h, who was on the eve of de- ting for India to reap the fruits of his apostacy, as pronounced it (it is hardly worth particularising), ppening to offend the nice sense of Lord, or, as he :n delighted to be called, Citizen Stanhope, deprived at once of the last hopes of a guinea from the last ron that had stuck by us ; and breaking up our ablishment, left us to the safe, but somewhat rtifying, neglect of the Crown Lawyers. It was ıut this time, or a little earlier, that Dan Stuart de that curious confession to us, that he had ever deliberately walked into an Exhibition at merset House in his life."



BARRENNESS OF THE IMAGINATIVE FACULTY IN THE PRODUCTIONS OF MODERN ART

HOGARTH excepted, can we produce any one painter within the last fifty years, or since the humour of exhibiting began, that has treated a story *imaginatively?* By this we mean, upon whom his subject has so acted, that it has seemed to direct *him* —not to be arranged by him? Any upon whom its leading or collateral points have impressed themselves so tyrannically, that he dared not treat it otherwise,

est he should falsify a revelation? Any that has mparted to his compositions, not merely so much ruth as is enough to convey a story with clearness, ut that individualising property, which should keep he subject so treated distinct in feature from every ther subject, however similar, and to common ap- rehensions almost identical; so as that we might ay, this and this part could have found an appropriate lace in no other picture in the world but this? Is here any thing in modern art—we will not demand hat it should be equal—but in any way analogous to hat Titian has effected, in that wonderful bringing ogether of two times in the "Ariadne," in the National Gallery? Precipitous, with his reeling atyr rout about him, re-peopling and re-illuming uddenly the waste places, drunk with a new fury eyond the grape, Bacchus, born in fire, fire-like flings imself at the Cretan. This is the time present. With this telling of the story—an artist, and no rdinary one, might remain richly proud. Guido, in is harmonious version of it, saw no further. But rom the depth of the imaginative spirit Titian has ecalled past time, and laid it contributory with the resent to one simultaneous effect. With the desert ll ringing with the mad cymbals of his followers, ade lucid with the presence and new offers of a god, —as if unconscious of Bacchus, or but idly casting her yes as upon some unconcerning pageant—her soul ndistracted from Theseus—Ariadne is still pacing he solitary shore in as much heart-silence, and in lmost the same local solitude, with which she awoke t day-break to catch the forlorn last glances of the il that bore away the Athenian.

Here are two points miraculously co-uniting; fierce ociety, with the feeling of solitude still absolute; oon-day revelations, with the accidents of the dull rey dawn unquenched and lingering; the *present*

Bacchus, with the *past* Ariadne ; two stories, with double Time ; separate, and harmonising. Had the artist made the woman one shade less indifferent to the God ; still more, had she expressed a rapture at his advent, where would have been the story of the mighty desolation of the heart previous ? merged in the insipid accident of a flattering offer met with a welcome acceptance. The broken heart for Theseus was not lightly to be pieced up by a God.

We have before us a fine rough print, from a picture by Raphael in the Vatican. It is the Presentation of the new-born Eve to Adam by the Almighty. A fairer mother of mankind we might imagine, and a goodlier sire perhaps of men since born. But these are matters subordinate to the conception of the *situation*, displayed in this extraordinary production. A tolerably modern artist would have been satisfied with tempering certain raptures of connubial anticipation, with a suitable acknowledgment to the Giver of the blessing, in the countenance of the first bridegroom ; something like the divided attention of the child (Adam was here a child man) between the given toy, and the mother who had just blest it with the bauble. This is the obvious, the first-sight view, the superficial. An artist of a higher grade, considering the awful presence they were in, would have taken care to subtract something from the expression of the more human passion, and to heighten the more spiritual one. This would be as much as an exhibition-goer, from the opening of Somerset House to last year's show, has been encouraged to look for. It is obvious to hint at a lower expression yet, in a picture, that for respects of drawing and colouring, might be deemed not wholly inadmissible within these art-fostering-walls, in which the raptures should be as ninety-nine, the gratitude as one, or perhaps Zero ! By neither the one passion nor the other has

Raphael expounded the situation of Adam. Singly upon his brow sits the absorbing sense of wonder at the created miracle. The *moment* is seized by the intuitive artist, perhaps not self-conscious of his art, in which neither of the conflicting emotions—a moment how abstracted—have had time to spring up, or to battle for indecorous mastery.—We have seen a landscape of a justly admired neoteric, in which he aimed at delineating a fiction, one of the most severely beautiful in antiquity—the gardens of the Hesperides. To do Mr —— justice he had painted a laudable orchard, with fitting seclusion, and a veritable dragon (of which a Polypheme, by Poussin, is somehow a fac-simile for the situation) looking over into the world shut out backwards, so that none but a "still-climbing Hercules" could hope to catch a peep at the admired Ternary of Recluses. No conventual porter could keep his keys better than this custos with the "lidless eyes." He not only sees that none *do* intrude into that privacy, but, as clear as daylight, that none but *Hercules aut Diabolus* by any manner of means *can*. So far all is well. We have absolute solitude here or nowhere. *Ab extra* the damsels are snug enough. But here the artist's courage seems to have failed him. He began to pity his pretty charge, and, to comfort the irksomeness, has peopled their solitude with a bevy of fair attendants, maids of honour, or ladies of the bed-chamber, according to the approved etiquette at a court of the nineteenth century; giving to the whole scene the air of a *fête champêtre*, if we will but excuse the absence of the gentlemen. This is well, and Watteauish. But what is become of the solitary mystery—the

> Daughters three,
> That sing around the golden tree?

This is not the way in which Poussin would have treated this subject.

The paintings, or rather the stupendous architectural designs, of a modern artist, have been urged as objections to the theory of our motto. They are of a character, we confess, to stagger it. His towered structures are of the highest order of the material sublime. Whether they were dreams, or transcripts of some elder workmanship—Assyrian ruins old—restored by this mighty artist, they satisfy our most stretched and craving conceptions of the glories of the antique world. It is a pity that they were ever peopled. On that side, the imagination of the artist halts, and appears defective. Let us examine the point of the story in the "Belshazzar's Feast." We will introduce it by an apposite anecdote.

The court historians of the day record, that at the first dinner given by the late King (then Prince Regent) at the Pavilion, the following characteristic frolic was played off. The guests were select and admiring; the banquet profuse and admirable; the lights lustrous and oriental; the eye was perfectly dazzled with the display of plate, among which the great gold salt-cellar, brought from the regalia in the Tower for this especial purpose, itself a tower! stood conspicuous for its magnitude. And now the Rev. * * * * the then admired court Chaplain, was proceeding with the grace, when, at a signal given, the lights were suddenly overcast, and a huge transparency was discovered, in which glittered in gold letters—

"BRIGHTON—EARTHQUAKE—SWALLOW-UP-ALIVE!"

Imagine the confusion of the guests; the Georges and garters, jewels, bracelets, moulted upon the occasion! The fans dropped, and picked up the next morning by the sly court pages! Mrs Fitz-what's-her-name fainting, and the Countess of * * * holding the smelling-bottle, till the good-humoured Prince caused harmony to be restored by calling in fresh


the confusion of the guests"
C. S. Brock
1879

candles, and declaring that the whole was nothing but a pantomime *hoax*, got up by the ingenious Mr Farley, of Covent Garden, from hints which his Royal Highness himself had furnished! Then imagine the infinite applause that followed, the mutual rallyings, the declarations that "they were not much frightened," of the assembled galaxy.

The point of time in the picture exactly answers to the appearance of the transparency in the anecdote. The huddle, the flutter, the bustle, the escape, the alarm, and the mock alarm; the prettinesses heightened by consternation; the courtier's fear which was flattery, and the lady's which was affectation; all that we may conceive to have taken place in a mob of Brighton courtiers, sympathising with the well-acted surprise of their sovereign; all this, and no more, is exhibited by the well-dressed lords and ladies in the Hall of Belus. Just this sort of consternation we have seen among a flock of disquieted wild geese at the report only of a gun having gone off!

But is this vulgar fright, this mere animal anxiety for the preservation of their persons,—such as we have witnessed at a theatre, when a slight alarm of fire has been given—an adequate exponent of a supernatural terror? the way in which the finger of God, writing judgments, would have been met by the withered conscience? There is a human fear, and a divine fear. The one is disturbed, restless, and bent upon escape. The other is bowed down, effortless, passive. When the spirit appeared before Eliphaz in the visions of the night, and the hair of his flesh stood up, was it in the thoughts of the Temanite to ring the bell of his chamber, or to call up the servants? But let us see in the text what there is to justify all this huddle of vulgar consternation.

From the words of Daniel it appears that Belshazzar had made a great feast to a thousand of his

lords, and drank wine before the thousand. The golden and silver vessels are gorgeously enumerated, with the princes, the king's concubines, and his wives. Then follows—

"In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace; and the *king* saw the part of the hand that wrote. Then the *king's* countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosened, and his knees smote one against another."

This is the plain text. By no hint can it be otherwise inferred, but that the appearance was solely confined to the fancy of Belshazzar, that his single brain was troubled. Not a word is spoken of its being seen by any else there present, not even by the queen herself, who merely undertakes for the interpretation of the phenomenon, as related to her, doubtless, by her husband. The lords are simply said to be astonished; *i.e.*, at the trouble and the change of countenance in their sovereign. Even the prophet does not appear to have seen the scroll, which the king saw. He recals it only, as Joseph did the Dream to the King of Egypt. "Then was the part of the hand sent from him [the Lord], and this writing was written." He speaks of the phantasm as past.

Then what becomes of this needless multiplication of the miracle? this message to a royal conscience, singly expressed—for it was said, "thy kingdom is divided,"—simultaneously impressed upon the fancies of a thousand courtiers, who were implied in it neither directly nor grammatically?

But admitting the artist's own version of the story, and that the sight was seen also by the thousand courtiers—let it have been visible to all Babylon—as the knees of Belshazzar were shaken, and his countenance troubled, even so would the knees of every

man in Babylon, and their countenances, as of an individual man, have been troubled; bowed, bent down, so would they have remained, stupor-fixed, with no thought of struggling with that inevitable judgment.

Not all that is optically possible to be seen, is to be shown in every picture. The eye delightedly dwells upon the brilliant individualities in a "Marriage at Cana," by Veronese, or Titian, to the very texture and colour of the wedding garments, the ring glittering upon the bride's finger, the metal and fashion of the wine-pots; for at such seasons there is leisure and luxury to be curious. But in a "day of judgment," or in a "day of lesser horrors, yet divine," as at the impious feast of Belshazzar, the eye should see, as the actual eye of an agent or patient in the immediate scene would see, only in masses and indistinction. Not only the female attire and jewelry exposed to the critical eye of fashion, as minutely as the dresses in a lady's magazine, in the criticised picture,—but perhaps the curiosities of anatomical science, and studied diversities of posture in the falling angels and sinners of Michael Angelo, —have no business in their great subjects. There was no leisure for them.

By a wise falsification, the great masters of painting got at their true conclusions; by not showing the actual appearances, that is, all that was to be seen at any given moment by an indifferent eye, but only what the eye might be supposed to see in the doing or suffering of some portentous action. Suppose the moment of the swallowing up of Pompeii. There they were to be seen—houses, columns, architectural proportions, differences of public and private buildings, men and women at their standing occupations, the diversified thousand postures, attitudes, dresses, in some confusion truly, but physically they

were visible. But what eye saw them at that eclipsing moment, which reduces confusion to a kind of unity, and when the senses are upturned from their proprieties, when sight and hearing are a feeling only? A thousand years have passed, and we are at leisure to contemplate the weaver fixed standing at his shuttle, the baker at his oven, and to turn over with antiquarian coolness the pots and pans of Pompeii.

"Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon." Who, in reading this magnificent Hebraism, in his conception, sees aught but the heroic son of Nun, with the outstretched arm, and the greater and lesser light obsequious? Doubtless there were to be seen hill and dale, and chariots and horsemen, on open plain, or winding by secret defiles, and all the circumstances and stratagems of war. But whose eyes would have been conscious of this array at the interposition of the synchronic miracle? Yet in the picture of this subject by the artist of the "Belshazzar's Feast"—no ignoble work either—the marshalling and landscape of the war is everything, the miracle sinks into an anecdote of the day; and the eye may "dart through rank and file traverse" for some minutes, before it shall discover, among his armed followers, *which is Joshua!* Not modern art alone, but ancient, where only it is to be found if anywhere, can be detected erring, from defect of this imaginative faculty. The world has nothing to show of the preternatural in painting, transcending the figure of Lazarus bursting his grave-clothes, in the great picture at Angerstein's. It seems a thing between two beings. A ghastly horror at itself struggles with newly-apprehending gratitude at second life bestowed. It cannot forget that it was a ghost. It has hardly felt that it is a body. It has

to tell of the world of spirits.—Was it from a feeling, that the crowd of half-impassioned by-standers, and the still more irrelevant herd of passers-by at a distance, who have not heard or but faintly have been told of the passing miracle, admirable as they are in design and hue—for it is a glorified work—do not respond adequately to the action—that the single figure of the Lazarus has been attributed to Michael Angelo, and the mighty Sebastian unfairly robbed of the fame of the greater half of the interest? Now that there were not indifferent passers-by, within actual scope of the eyes of those present at the miracle, to whom the sound of it had but faintly, or not at all, reached, it would be hardihood to deny; but would they see them? or can the mind in the conception of it admit of such unconcerning objects? can it think of them at all? or what associating league to the imagination can there be between the seers, and the seers not, of a presential miracle?

Were an artist to paint upon demand a picture of a Dryad, we will ask whether, in the present low state of expectation, the patron would not, or ought not to be fully satisfied with a beautiful naked figure recumbent under wide-stretched oaks? Disseat those woods, and place the same figure among fountains, and fall of pellucid water, and you have a—Naiad! Not so in a rough print we have seen after Julio Romano, we think—for it is long since—*there*, by no process, with mere change of scene, could the figure have reciprocated characters. Long, grotesque, fantastic, yet with a grace of her own, beautiful in convolution and distortion, linked to her connatural tree, co-twisting with its limbs her own, till both seemed either—these, animated branches; those, disanimated members—yet the animal and vegetable lives sufficiently kept distinct—*his* Dryad lay—an approximation of two natures, which to conceive,

it must be seen ; analogous to, not the same with, the delicacies of Ovidian transformations.

To the lowest subjects, and, to a superficial comprehension, the most barren, the Great Masters gave loftiness and fruitfulness. The large eye of genius saw in the meanness of present objects their capabilities of treatment from their relations to some grand Past or Future. How has Raphael—we must still linger about the Vatican—treated the humble craft of the ship-builder, in *his* "Building of the Ark?" It is in that scriptural series, to which we have referred, and which, judging from some fine rough old graphic sketches of them which we possess, seem to be of a higher and more poetic grade than even the Cartoons. The dim of sight are the timid and the shrinking. There is a cowardice in modern art. As the Frenchmen, of whom Coleridge's friend made the prophetic guess at Rome, from the beard and horns of the Moses of Michael Angelo collected no inferences beyond that of a He Goat and a Cornuto ; so from this subject, of mere mechanic promise, it would instinctively turn away, as from one incapable of investiture with any grandeur. The dock-yards at Woolwich would object derogatory associations. The depôt at Chatham would be the mote and the beam in its intellectual eye. But not to the nautical preparations in the shipyards of Civita Vecchia did Raphael look for instructions, when he imagined the Building of the Vessel that was to be conservatory of the wrecks of the species of drowned mankind. In the intensity of the action, he keeps ever out of sight the meanness of the operation. There is the Patriarch, in calm forethought, and with holy prescience, giving directions. And there are his agents—the solitary but sufficient Three—hewing, sawing, every one with the might and earnestness of a Demiurgus ; under some instinctive

rather than technical guidance; giant-muscled; every one a Hercules, or liker to those Vulcanian Three, that in sounding caverns under Mongibello wrought in fire—Brontes, and black Steropes, and Pyracmon. So work the workmen that should repair a world!

Artists again err in the confounding of *poetic* with *pictorial subjects*. In the latter, the exterior accidents are nearly everything, the unseen qualities as nothing. Othello's colour—the infirmities and corpulence of a Sir John Falstaff—do they haunt us perpetually in the reading? or are they obtruded upon our conceptions one time for ninety-nine that we are lost in admiration at the respective moral or intellectual attributes of the character? But in a picture Othello is *always* a Blackamoor; and the other only Plump Jack. Deeply corporealised, and enchained hopelessly in the grovelling fetters of externality, must be the mind, to which, in its better moments, the image of the high-souled, high-intelligenced Quixote—the errant Star of Knighthood, made more tender by eclipse—has never presented itself, divested from the unhallowed accompaniment of a Sancho, or a rabblement at the heels of Rosinante. That man has read his book by halves; he has laughed, mistaking his author's purport, which was—tears. The artist that pictures Quixote (and it is in this degrading point that he is every season held up at our Exhibitions) in the shallow hope of exciting mirth, would have joined the rabble at the heels of his starved steed. We wish not to see *that* counterfeited, which we would not have wished to see in the reality. Conscious of the heroic inside of the noble Quixote, who, on hearing that his withered person was passing, would have stepped over his threshold to gaze upon his forlorn habiliments, and the "strange bed-fellows which misery brings a man acquainted

with?" Shade of Cervantes! who in thy Second Part could put into the mouth of thy Quixote those high aspirations of a super-chivalrous gallantry, where he replies to one of the shepherdesses, apprehensive that he would spoil their pretty net-works, and inviting him to be a guest with them, in accents like these: "Truly, fairest Lady, Actæon was not more astonished when he saw Diana bathing herself at the fountain, than I have been in beholding your beauty: I commend the manner of your pastime, and thank you for your kind offers; and, if I may serve you, so I may be sure you will be obeyed, you may command me: for my profession is this, To shew myself thankful, and a doer of good to all sorts of people, especially of the rank that your person shows you to be; and if those nets, as they take up but a little piece of ground, should take up the whole world, I would seek out new worlds to pass through, rather than break them: and (he adds,) that you may give credit to this my exaggeration, behold at least he that promiseth you this, is Don Quixote de la Mancha, if haply this name hath come to your hearing." Illustrious Romancer! were the "fine frenzies," which possessed the brain of thy own Quixote, a fit subject, as in this Second Part, to be exposed to the jeers of Duennas and Serving Men? to be monstered, and shown up at the heartless banquets of great men? Was that pitiable infirmity, which in thy First Part misleads him, *always from within*, into half-ludicrous, but more than half-compassionable and admirable errors, not infliction enough from heaven, that men by studied artifices must devise and practise upon the humour, to inflame where they should soothe it? Why, Goneril would have blushed to practise upon the abdicated king at this rate, and the she-wolf Regan not have endured to play the pranks upon his fled wits, which thou hast made thy

Quixote suffer in Duchesses' halls, and at the hands of that unworthy nobleman.[1]

In the First Adventure, even, it needed all the art of the most consummate artist in the Book way that the world hath yet seen, to keep up in the mind of the reader the heroic attributes of the character without relaxing; so as absolutely that they shall suffer no alloy from the debasing fellowship of the clown. If it ever obtrudes itself as a disharmony, are we inclined to laugh; or not, rather, to indulge a contrary emotion? —Cervantes, stung, perchance, by the relish with which *his* Reading Public had received the fooleries of the man, more to their palates than the generosities of the master, in the sequel let his pen run riot, lost the harmony and the balance, and sacrificed a great idea to the taste of his contemporaries. We know that in the present day the Knight has fewer admirers than the Squire. Anticipating, what did actually happen to him—as afterwards it did to his scarce inferior follower, the Author of "Guzman de Alfarache"—that some less knowing hand would prevent him by a spurious Second Part; and judging, that it would be easier for his competitor to out-bid him in the comicalities, than in the *romance*, of his work, he abandoned his Knight, and has fairly set up the Squire for his Hero. For what else has he unsealed the eyes of Sancho; and instead of that twilight state of semi-insanity—the madness at second-hand—the contagion, caught from a stronger mind infected—that war between native cunning, and hereditary deference, with which he has hitherto accompanied his master—two for a pair almost—does he substitute a downright Knave, with open eyes, for his own ends only following a confessed Madman; and offer-

[1] Yet from this Second Part, our cried-up pictures are mostly selected, the waiting-women with beards, &c.

ing at one time to lay, if not actually laying, *hands* upon him! From the moment that Sancho loses his reverence, Don Quixote is become—a treatable lunatic. Our artists handle him accordingly.





REJOICINGS UPON THE NEW YEAR'S COMING OF AGE

THE *Old Year* being dead, and the *New Year* coming of age, which he does, by Calendar law, as soon as the breath is out of the old gentleman's body, nothing would serve the young spark but he must give a dinner upon the occasion, to which all the *Days* in the year were invited. The *Festivals*, whom he deputed as his stewards, were mightily taken with the notion. They had been engaged time out of mind, they said, in providing mirth and good cheer for mortals below; and it was time they should have a taste of their own bounty. It was stiffly debated among them, whether the *Fasts* should be admitted. Some said, the appearance of such lean, starved guests, with their mortified faces, would pervert the ends of the meeting. But the objection was over-ruled by *Christmas Day*, who had a design upon *Ash Wednesday* (as you shall hear), and a mighty desire to see how the old Domine would behave himself in his cups. Only the *Vigils* were requested to come with their lanterns, to light the gentlefolks home at night.

All the *Days* came to their day. Covers were pro-

vided for three hundred and sixty-five guests at the principal table; with an occasional knife and fork at the side-board for the *Twenty-Ninth of February*.

I should have told you, that cards of invitation had been issued. The carriers were the *Hours*; twelve little, merry, whirligig foot-pages, as you should desire to see, that went all round, and found out the persons invited well enough, with the exception of *Easter Day*, *Shrove Tuesday*, and a few such *Moveables*, who had lately shifted their quarters.

Well, they all met at last, foul *Days*, fine *Days*, all sorts of *Days*, and a rare din they made of it. There was nothing but, Hail! fellow *Day*,—well met—brother *Day*—sister *Day*,—only *Lady Day* kept a little on the aloof, and seemed somewhat scornful. Yet some said, *Twelfth Day* cut her out and out, for she came in a tiffany suit, white and gold, like a queen on a frost-cake, all royal, glittering, and *Epiphanous*. The rest came, some in green, some in white—but old *Lent and his family* were not yet out of mourning. Rainy *Days* came in, dripping; and sun-shiny *Days* helped them to change their stockings. *Wedding Day* was there in his marriage finery, a little the worse for wear. *Pay Day* came late, as he always does; and *Doomsday* sent word—he might be expected.

April Fool (as my young lord's jester) took upon himself to marshal the guests, and wild work he made with it. It would have posed old Erra Pater to have found out any given *Day* in the year, to erect a scheme upon—good *Days*, bad *Days*, were so shuffled together, to the confounding of all sober horoscopy.

He had stuck the *Twenty First of June* next to the *Twenty Second of December*, and the former looked like a Maypole siding a marrow-bone. *Ash Wednesday* got wedged in (as was concerted) betwixt *Christmas* and

Lord Mayor's Days. Lord! how he laid about him! Nothing but barons of beef and turkeys would go down with him—to the great greasing and detriment of his new sackcloth bib and tucker. And still *Christmas Day* was at his elbow, plying him with the wassail-bowl, till he roared, and hiccupp'd, and protested there was no faith in dried ling, but commended it to the devil for a sour, windy, acrimonious, censorious, hy-po-crit-crit-critical mess, and no dish for a gentleman. Then he dipt his fist into the middle of the great custard that stood before his *left-hand neighbour*, and daubed his hungry beard all over with it, till you would have taken him for the *Last day in December*, it so hung in icicles.

At another part of the table, *Shrove Tuesday* was helping the *Second of September* to some cock broth, —which courtesy the latter returned with the delicate thigh of a hen pheasant—so there was no love lost for that matter. The *Last of Lent* was spunging upon *Shrovetide's* pancakes; which *April Fool* perceiving, told him he did well, for pancakes were proper to a *good fry-day*.

In another part, a hubbub arose about the *Thirtieth of January*, who, it seems, being a sour puritanic character, that thought nobody's meat good or sanctified enough for him, had smuggled into the room a calf's head, which he had had cooked at home for that purpose, thinking to feast thereon incontinently; but as it lay in the dish *March manyweathers*, who is a very fine lady, and subject to the meagrims, screamed out there was a "human head in the platter," and raved about Herodias' daughter to that degree, that the obnoxious viand was obliged to be removed; nor did she recover her stomach till she had gulped down a *Restorative*, confected of *Oak Apple*, which the merry *Twenty Ninth of May* always carries about with him for that purpose.

The King's health[1] being called for after this, a notable dispute arose between the *Twelfth of August* (a zealous old Whig gentlewoman), and the *Twenty Third of April* (a new-fangled lady of the Tory stamp), as to which of them should have the honour to propose it. *August* grew hot upon the matter, affirming time out of mind the prescriptive right to have lain with her, till her rival had basely supplanted her; whom she represented as little better than a *kept* mistress, who went about in *fine clothes*, while she (the legitimate BIRTHDAY) had scarcely a rag, &c.

April Fool, being made mediator, confirmed the right in the strongest form of words to the appellant, but decided for peace' sake that the exercise of it should remain with the present possessor. At the same time, he slily rounded the first lady in the ear, that an action might lie against the Crown for *bi-geny*.

It beginning to grow a little duskish, *Candlemas* lustily bawled out for lights, which was opposed by all the *Days*, who protested against burning daylight. Then fair water was handed round in silver ewers, and the *same lady* was observed to take an unusual time in *Washing* herself.

May Day, with that sweetness which is peculiar to her, in a neat speech proposing the health of the founder, crowned her goblet (and by her example the rest of the company) with garlands. This being done, the lordly *New Year* from the upper end of the table, in a cordial but somewhat lofty tone, returned thanks. He felt proud on an occasion of meeting so many of his worthy father's late tenants, promised to improve their farms, and at the same time to abate (if any thing was found unreasonable) in their rents.

At the mention of this, the four *Quarter Days* involuntarily looked at each other, and smiled; *April*

[1] The late King.

ool whistled to an old tune of "New Brooms;" and surly old rebel at the farther end of the table (who as discovered to be no other than the *Fifth of November*), muttered out, distinctly enough to be eard by the whole company, words to this effect, hat, "when the old one is gone, he is a fool that oks for a better." Which rudeness of his, the uests resenting, unanimously voted his expulsion; nd the male-content was thrust out neck and heels ito the cellar, as the properest place for such a *utefeu* and firebrand as he had shown himself to be.

Order being restored—the young lord (who, to say uth, had been a little ruffled, and put beside his atory) in as few, and yet as obliging words as ssible, assured them of entire welcome; and, with graceful turn, singling out poor *Twenty Ninth of ebruary*, that had sate all this while mumchance at e side-board, begged to couple his health with that the good company before him—which he drank cordingly; observing, that he had not seen his nest face any time these four years—with a number endearing expressions besides. At the same time, moving the solitary *Day* from the forlorn seat which d been assigned him, he stationed him at his own ard, somewhere between the *Greek Calends* and *atter Lammas*.

Ash Wednesday, being now called upon for a song, ith his eyes fast stuck in his head, and as well as the anary he had swallowed would give him leave, uck up a Carol, which *Christmas Day* had taught m for the nonce; and was followed by the latter, ho gave "Miserere" in fine style, hitting off the umping notes and lengthened drawl of *Old Mortifica-n* with infinite humour. *April Fool* swore they had changed conditions: but *Good Friday* was observed look extremely grave; and *Sunday* held her fan fore her face, that she might not be seen to smile.

Shrove-tide, *Lord Mayor's Day*, and *April Fool* next joined in a glee—

Which is the properest day to drink?

in which all the *Days* chiming in, made a merry burden.

They next fell to quibbles and conundrums. The question being proposed, who had the greatest number of followers—the *Quarter Days* said, there could be no question as to that; for they had all the creditors in the world dogging their heels. But *April Fool* gave it in favour of the *Forty Days before Easter*; because the debtors in all cases outnumbered the creditors, and they kept *lent* all the year.

All this while, *Valentine's Day* kept courting pretty *May*, who sate next him, slipping amorous *billets-doux* under the table, till the *Dog Days* (who are naturally of a warm constitution) began to be jealous, and to bark and rage exceedingly. *April Fool*, who likes a bit of sport above measure, and had some pretensions to the lady besides, as being but a cousin once removed,—clapped and halloo'd them on; and as fast as their indignation cooled, those mad wags, the *Ember Days*, were at it with their bellows, to blow it into a flame; and all was in a ferment: till old Madam *Septuagesima* (who boasts herself the *Mother of the Days*) wisely diverted the conversation with a tedious tale of the lovers which she could reckon when she was young; and of one Master *Rogation Day* in particular, who was for ever putting the *question* to her; but she kept him at a distance, as the chronicle would tell—by which I apprehend she meant the Almanack. Then she rambled on to the *Days that were gone*, the *good old Days*, and so to the *Days before the Flood*—which plainly showed her old head to be little better than crazed and doited.

Day being ended, the *Days* called for their cloaks

and great coats, and took their leaves. *Lord Mayor's Day* went off in a Mist, as usual; *Shortest Day* in a deep black Fog, that wrapt the little gentleman all round like a hedge-hog. Two *Vigils*—so watchmen are called in heaven—saw *Christmas Day* safe home—they had been used to the business before. Another *Vigil*—a stout, sturdy patrole, called the *Eve of St Christopher*—seeing *Ash Wednesday* in a condition little better than he should be—e'en whipt him over his shoulders, pick-a-back fashion, and *Old Mortification* went floating home singing—

On the bat's back do I fly,

and a number of old snatches besides, between drunk and sober, but very few Aves or Penitentiaries (you may believe me) were among them. *Longest Day* set off westward in beautiful crimson and gold—the rest, some in one fashion, some in another; but *Valentine* and pretty *May* took their departure together in one of the prettiest silvery twilights a Lover's Day could wish to set in.





THE WEDDING

I DO not know when I have been better pleased than at being invited last week to be present at the wedding of a friend's daughter. I like to make one at these ceremonies, which to us old people give back our youth in a manner, and restore our gayest season, in the remembrance of our own success, or the regrets, scarcely less tender, of our own youthful disappointments, in this point of a settlement. On these occasions I am sure to be in good-humour for a week or two after, and enjoy a reflected honey-moon. Being without a family, I am flattered with these temporary adoptions into a friend's family; I feel a sort of cousinhood, or uncleship, for the season; I am inducted into degrees of affinity; and, in the participated socialities of the little community, I lay down for a brief while my solitary bachelorship. I carry this humour so far, that I take it unkindly to be left out, even when a funeral is going on in the house of a dear friend. But to my subject.——

The union itself had been long settled, but its

celebration had been hitherto deferred, to an almost unreasonable state of suspense in the lovers, by some invincible prejudices which the bride's father had unhappily contracted upon the subject of the too early marriages of females. He has been lecturing any time these five years—for to that length the courtship has been protracted—upon the propriety of putting off the solemnity, till the lady should have completed her five and twentieth year. We all began to be afraid that a suit, which as yet had abated of none of its ardours, might at last be lingered on, till passion had time to cool, and love go out in the experiment. But a little wheedling on the part of his wife, who was by no means a party to these over-strained notions, joined to some serious expostulations on that of his friends, who, from the growing infirmities of the old gentleman, could not promise ourselves many years' enjoyment of his company, and were anxious to bring matters to a conclusion during his life-time, at length prevailed; and on Monday last the daughter of my old friend, Admiral ——, having attained the *womanly* age of nineteen, was conducted to the church by her pleasant cousin J——, who told some few years older.

Before the youthful part of my female readers express their indignation at the abominable loss of time occasioned to the lovers by the preposterous notions of my old friend, they will do well to consider the reluctance which a fond parent naturally feels at parting with his child. To this unwillingness, I believe, in most cases may be traced the difference of opinion on this point between child and parent, whatever pretences of interest or prudence may be held out to cover it. The hardheartedness of fathers is a fine theme for romance writers, a sure and moving topic; but is there not something untender, to say no more of it, in the hurry which a beloved child is



"The cold reasonings of a father."

sometimes in to tear herself from the paternal sto
and commit herself to strange graftings? The c
is heightened where the lady, as in the pres
instance, happens to be an only child. I do
understand these matters experimentally, but I
make a shrewd guess at the wounded pride o
parent upon these occasions. It is no new obser
tion, I believe, that a lover in most cases has no r
so much to be feared as the father. Certainly th
is a jealousy in *unparallel subjects*, which is little
heart-rending than the passion which we more stri
christen by that name. Mothers' scruples are m
easily got over; for this reason, I suppose, that
protection transferred to a husband is less a dero

tion and a loss to their authority than to the paternal. Mothers, besides, have a trembling foresight, which paints the inconveniences (impossible to be conceived in the same degree by the other parent) of a life of forlorn celibacy, which the refusal of a tolerable match may entail upon their child. Mothers' instinct is a surer guide here, than the cold reasonings of a father on such a topic. To this instinct may be imputed, and by it alone may be excused, the unbeseeming artifices, by which some wives push on the matrimonial projects of their daughters, which the husband, however approving, shall entertain with comparative indifference. A little shamelessness on this head is pardonable. With this explanation, forwardness becomes a grace, and maternal importunity receives the name of a virtue.—But the parson stays, while I preposterously assume his office; I am preaching, while the bride is on the threshold.

Nor let any of my female readers suppose that the sage reflections which have just escaped me have the obliquest tendency of application to the young lady, who, it will be seen, is about to venture upon a change in her condition, at a *mature and competent age*, and not without the fullest approbation of all parties. I only deprecate *very hasty marriages*.

It had been fixed that the ceremony should be gone through at an early hour, to give time for a little *dejeune* afterwards, to which a select party of friends had been invited. We were in church a little before the clock struck eight.

Nothing could be more judicious or graceful than the dress of the bride-maids—the three charming Miss Foresters—on this morning. To give the bride an opportunity of shining singly, they had come habited all in green. I am ill at describing female apparel; but while *she* stood at the altar in vestments white and candid as her thoughts, a sacri-

ficial whiteness, *they* assisted in robes, such as might become Diana's nymphs—Foresters indeed—as such who had not yet come to the resolution of putting off cold virginity. These young maids, not being so blest as to have a mother living, I am told, keep single for their father's sake, and live all together so happy with their remaining parent, that the hearts of their lovers are ever broken with the prospect (so inauspicious to their hopes) of such uninterrupted and provoking home-comfort. Gallant girls! each a victim worthy of Iphigenia!

I do not know what business I have to be present in solemn places. I cannot divest me of an unseasonable disposition to levity upon the most awful occasions. I was never cut out for a public functionary. Ceremony and I have long shaken hands: but I could not resist the importunities of the young lady's father, whose gout unhappily confined him at home, to act as parent on this occasion, and *give away the bride.* Something ludicrous occurred to me at this most serious of all moments—a sense of my unfitness to have the disposal, even in imagination, of the sweet young creature beside me. I fear I was betrayed to some lightness, for the awful eye of the parson—and the rector's eye of Saint Mildred's in the Poultry is no trifle of a rebuke—was upon me in an instant, souring my incipient jest to the tristful severities of a funeral.

This was the only misbehaviour which I can plead to upon this solemn occasion, unless what was objected to me after the ceremony by one of the handsome Miss T——s, be accounted a solecism. She was pleased to say that she had never seen a gentleman before me give away a bride in black. Now black has been my ordinary apparel so long—indeed I take it to be the proper costume of an author—the stage sanctions it—that to have appeared



"No Miss Emily to fill it for him"

ome lighter colour would have raised more mirth
ny expense, than the anomaly had created censure.
I could perceive that the bride's mother, and
e elderly ladies present (God bless them !) would
e been well content, if I had come in any other
ur than that. But I got over the omen by a
y apologue, which I remembered out of Pilpay,
ome Indian author, of all the birds being invited
he linnets' wedding, at which, when all the rest
e in their gayest feathers, the raven alone apolo-
d for his cloak because "he had no other." This
rably reconciled the elders. But with the young
ple all was merriment, and shaking of hands,
congratulations, and kissing away the bride's
s, and kissings from her in return, till a young
, who assumed some experience in these
ters, having worn the nuptial bands some four
five weeks longer than her friend, rescued her,
ly observing, with half an eye upon the bride-
om, that at this rate she would have "none
"

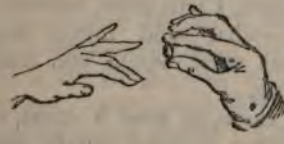
My friend the admiral was in fine wig and buckle
this occasion—a striking contrast to his usual
lect of personal appearance. He did not once
ve up his borrowed locks (his custom ever at his
rning studies) to betray the few grey stragglers of
own beneath them. He wore an aspect of
ughtful satisfaction. I trembled for the hour,
ich at length approached, when after a protracted
akfast of three hours—if stores of cold fowls,
gues, hams, botargoes, dried fruits, wines, cordials,
, can deserve so meagre an appellation—the coach
s announced, which was come to carry off the
de and bridegroom for a season (as custom has
sibly ordained) into the country; upon which
ign, wishing them a felicitous journey, let us
urn to the assembled guests.

> As when a well-graced actor leaves the stage,
> The eyes of men
> Are idly bent on him that enters next,

so idly did we bend our eyes upon one another, when the chief performers in the morning's pageant had vanished. None told his tale. None sipped her glass. The poor Admiral made an effort—it was not much. I had anticipated so far. Even the infinity of full satisfaction, that had betrayed itself through the prim looks and quiet deportment of his lady, began to wane into something of misgiving. No one knew whether to take their leaves or stay. We seemed assembled upon a silly occasion. In this crisis, betwixt tarrying and departure, I must do justice to a foolish talent of mine, which had otherwise like to have brought me into disgrace in the fore-part of the day; I mean a power, in any emergency, of thinking and giving vent to all manner of strange nonsense. In this awkward dilemma I found it sovereign. I rattled off some of my most excellent absurdities. All were willing to be relieved, at any expense of reason, from the pressure of the intolerable vacuum which had succeeded to the morning bustle. By this means I was fortunate in keeping together the better part of the company to a late hour: and a rubber of whist (the Admiral's favourite game) with some rare strokes of chance as well as skill, which came opportunely on his side—lengthened out till midnight—dismissed the old gentleman at last to his bed with comparatively easy spirits.

I have been at my old friend's various times since. I do not know a visiting place where every guest is so perfectly at his ease; nowhere, where harmony is so strangely the result of confusion. Every body is at cross purposes, yet the effect is so much better than uniformity. Contradictory orders; servants pulling one way; master and mistress driving some

other, yet both diverse; visitors huddled up in corners; chairs unsymmetrised; candles disposed by chance; meals at odd hours, tea and supper at once, or the latter preceding the former; the host and the guest conferring, yet each upon a different topic, each understanding himself, neither trying to understand or hear the other; draughts and politics, chess and political economy, cards and conversation on nautical matters, going on at once, without the hope, or indeed the wish, of distinguishing them, make it altogether the most perfect *concordia discors* you shall meet with. Yet somehow the old house is not quite what it should be. The Admiral still enjoys his pipe, but he has no Miss Emily to fill it for him. The instrument stands where it stood, but she is gone, whose delicate touch could sometimes for a short minute appease the warring elements. He has learnt, as Marvel expresses it, to "make his destiny his choice." He bears bravely up, but he does not come out with his flashes of wild wit so thick as formerly. His sea songs seldomer escape him. His wife, too, looks as if she wanted some younger body to scold and set to rights. We all miss a junior presence. It is wonderful how one young maiden freshens up, and keeps green, the paternal roof. Old and young seem to have an interest in her, so long as she is not absolutely disposed of. The youthfulness of the house is flown. Emily is married.





THE CHILD ANGEL

A DREAM

I CHANCED upon the prettiest, oddest, fantastical thing of a dream the other night, that you shall hear of. I had been reading the "Loves of the Angels," and went to bed with my head full of speculations, suggested by that extraordinary legend. It had given birth to innumerable conjectures; and, I remember, the last waking thought, which I gave expression to on my pillow, was a sort of wonder "what could come of it."

I was suddenly transported, how or whither I could scarcely make out—but to some celestial region. It was not the real heavens neither—not the downright Bible heaven—but a kind of fairyland heaven, about which a poor human fancy may have leave to sport and air itself, I will hope, without presumption.

Methought—what wild things dreams are!—I was present—at what would you imagine?—at an angel's gossiping.

Whence it came, or how it came, or who bid it come, or whether it came purely out of its own head, neither you nor I know—but there lay, sure

enough, wrapt in its little cloudy swaddling bands—a Child Angel.

Sun-threads — filmy beams — ran through the celestial napery of what seemed its princely cradle. All the winged orders hovered round, watching when the new-born should open its yet closed eyes; which, when it did, first one, and then the other—with a solicitude and apprehension, yet not such as, stained with fear, dim the expanding eye-lids of mortal infants, but as if to explore its path in those its unhereditary palaces—what an inextinguishable titter that time spared not celestial visages! Nor wanted there to my seeming—O the inexplicable simpleness of dreams!—bowls of that cheering nectar,

—which mortals *caudle* call below.

Nor were wanting faces of female ministrants,—stricken in years, as it might seem,—so dexterous were those heavenly attendants to counterfeit kindly similitudes of earth, to greet, with terrestrial child-rites the young *present*, which earth had made to heaven.

Then were celestial harpings heard, not in full symphony as those by which the spheres are tutored; but, as loudest instruments on earth speak oftentimes, muffled; so to accommodate their sound the better to the weak ears of the imperfect-born. And, with the noise of those subdued soundings, the Angelet sprang forth, fluttering its rudiments of pinions—but forthwith flagged and was recovered into the arms of those full-winged angels. And a wonder it was to see how, as years went round in heaven—a year in dreams is as a day—continually its white shoulders put forth buds of wings, but, wanting the perfect angelic nutriment, anon was shorn of its aspiring, and fell fluttering—still caught by angel hands—for ever to put forth shoots, and to fall fluttering,

because its birth was not of the unmixed vigour of heaven.

And a name was given to the Babe Angel, and it was to be called *Ge-Urania*, because its production was of earth and heaven.

And it could not taste of death, by reason of its adoption into immortal palaces; but it was to know weakness, and reliance, and the shadow of human imbecility; and it went with a lame gait; but in its goings it exceeded all mortal children in grace and swiftness. Then pity first sprang up in angelic bosoms; and yearnings (like the human) touched them at the sight of the immortal lame one.

And with pain did then first those Intuitive Essences, with pain and strife to their natures (not grief), put back their bright intelligences, and reduce their ethereal minds, schooling them to degrees and slower processes, so to adapt their lessons to the gradual illumination (as must needs be) of the half-earth-born; and what intuitive notices they could not repel (by reason that their nature is, to know all things at once), the half-heavenly novice, by the better part of its nature, aspired to receive into its understanding; so that Humility and Aspiration went on even-paced in the instruction of the glorious Amphibium.

But, by reason that Mature Humanity is too gross to breathe the air of that super-subtile region, its portion was, and is, to be a child for ever.

And because the human part of it might not press into the heart and inwards of the palace of its adoption, those full-natured angels tended it by turns in the purlieus of the palace, where were shady groves and rivulets, like this green earth from which it came; so Love, with Voluntary Humility, waited upon the entertainment of the new-adopted.

And myriads of years rolled round (in dreams Time

is nothing), and still it kept, and is to keep, perpetual childhood, and is the Tutelar Genius of Childhood upon earth, and still goes lame and lovely.

By the banks of the river Pison is seen, lone-sitting by the grave of the terrestrial Adah, whom the angel Nadir loved, a Child ; but not the same which I saw in heaven. A mournful hue overcasts its lineaments ; nevertheless, a correspondency is between the child by the grave, and that celestial orphan, whom I saw above ; and the dimness of the grief upon the heavenly, is a shadow or emblem of that which stains the beauty of the terrestrial. And this correspondency is not to be understood but by dreams.

And in the archives of heaven I had grace to read, how that once the angel Nadir, being exiled from his place for mortal passion, upspringing on the wings of parental love (such power had parental love for a moment to suspend the else-irrevocable law) appeared for a brief instant in his station ; and, depositing a wondrous Birth, straightway disappeared, and the palaces knew him no more. And this charge was the self-same Babe, who goeth lame and lovely —but Adah sleepeth by the river Pison.



OLD CHINA

I HAVE an almost feminine partiality for old china. When I go to see any great house, I enquire for the china-closet, and next for the picture gallery. I cannot defend the order of preference, but by saying, that we have all some taste or other, of too ancient a date to admit of our remembering distinctly that it was an acquired one. I can call to mind the first play, and the first exhibition, that I was taken to; but I am not conscious of a time when china jars and saucers were introduced into my imagination.

I had no repugnance then—why should I now have?—to those little, lawless, azure-tinctured grotesques, that under the notion of men and women, float about, uncircumscribed by any element, in that world before perspective—a china tea-cup.

I like to see my old friends—whom distance cannot

diminish—figuring up in the air (so they appear to our optics), yet on *terra firma* still—for so we must in courtesy interpret that speck of deeper blue,—which the decorous artist, to prevent absurdity, had made to spring up beneath their sandals.

I love the men with women's faces, and the women, if possible, with still more womanish expressions.

Here is a young and courtly Mandarin, handing tea to a lady from a salver—two miles off. See how distance seems to set off respect! And here the same lady, or another—for likeness is identity on tea-cups—is stepping into a little fairy boat, moored on the hither side of this calm garden river, with a dainty mincing foot, which in a right angle of incidence (as angles go in our world) must infallibly land her in the midst of a flowery mead—a furlong off on the other side of the same strange stream!

Farther on—if far or near can be predicated of their world—see horses, trees, pagodas, dancing the hays.

Here—a cow and rabbit couchant, and co-extensive—so objects show, seen through the lucid atmosphere of fine Cathay.

I was pointing out to my cousin last evening, over our Hyson, (which we are old fashioned enough to drink unmixed still of an afternoon) some of these *speciosa miracula* upon a set of extraordinary old blue china (a recent purchase) which we were now for the first time using; and could not help remarking, how favourable circumstances had been to us of late years, that we could afford to please the eye sometimes with trifles of this sort—when a passing sentiment seemed to overshade the brows of my companion. I am quick at detecting these summer clouds in Bridget.

"I wish the good old times would come again," she said, "when we were not quite so rich. I do



"Lighted out the relic from his dusty treasures."

not mean, that I want to be poor; but there was a middle state"—so she was pleased to ramble on,—"in which I am sure we were a great deal happier. A purchase is but a purchase, now that you have money enough and to spare. Formerly it used to be a triumph. When we coveted a cheap luxury (and, O! how much ado I had to get you to consent in those times!)—we were used to have a debate two or three days before, and to weigh the *for* and *against*, and think what we might spare it out of, and what saving we could hit upon, that should be an equivalent.

A thing was worth buying then, when we felt the money that we paid for it.

"Do you remember the brown suit, which you made to hang upon you, till all your friends cried shame upon you, it grew so thread-bare—and all because of that folio Beaumont and Fletcher, which you dragged home late at night from Barker's in Covent-garden? Do you remember how we eyed it for weeks before we could make up our minds to the purchase, and had not come to a determination till it was near ten o'clock of the Saturday night, when you set off from Islington, fearing you should be too late—and when the old bookseller with some grumbling opened his shop, and by the twinkling taper (for he was setting bedwards) lighted out the relic from his dusty treasures—and when you lugged it home, wishing it were twice as cumbersome—and when you presented it to me—and when we were exploring the perfectness of it (*collating* you called it) —and while I was repairing some of the loose leaves with paste, which your impatience would not suffer to be left till daybreak—was there no pleasure in being a poor man? or can those neat black clothes which you wear now, and are so careful to keep brushed, since we have become rich and finical, give you half the honest vanity, with which you flaunted it about in that overworn suit—your old corbeau—for four or five weeks longer than you should have done, to pacify your conscience for the mighty sum of fifteen—or sixteen shillings was it?—a great affair we thought it then—which you had lavished on the old folio. Now you can afford to buy any book that pleases you, but I do not see that you ever bring me home any nice old purchases now.

"When you came home with twenty apologies for laying out a less number of shillings upon that print after Lionardo, which we christened the 'Lady

Blanch;' when you looked at the purchase, and thought of the money—and thought of the money, and looked again at the picture—was there no pleasure in being a poor man? Now, you have nothing to do but to walk into Colnaghi's, and buy a wilderness of Lionardos. Yet do you?

"Then, do you remember our pleasant walks to Enfield, and Potter's Bar, and Waltham, when we had a holyday—holydays, and all other fun, are gone, now we are rich—and the little hand-basket in which I used to deposit our day's fare of savory cold lamb and salad—and how you would pry about at noontide for some decent house, where we might go in, and produce our store—only paying for the ale that you must call for—and speculate upon the looks of the landlady, and whether she was likely to allow us a table-cloth—and wish for such another honest hostess, as Izaak Walton has described many a one on the pleasant banks of the Lea, when he went a fishing—and sometimes they would prove obliging enough, and sometimes they would look grudgingly upon us—but we had cheerful looks still for one another, and would eat our plain food savorily, scarcely grudging Piscator his Trout Hall? Now,—when we go out a day's pleasuring, which is seldom moreover, we *ride* part of the way—and go into a fine inn, and order the best of dinners, never debating the expense—which, after all, never has half the relish of those chance country snaps, when we were at the mercy of uncertain usage, and a precarious welcome.

"You are too proud to see a play anywhere now but in the pit. Do you remember where it was we used to sit, when we saw the Battle of Hexham, and the Surrender of Calais, and Bannister and Mrs Bland in the Children in the Wood—when we squeezed out our shillings a-piece to sit three or four

times in a season in the one-shilling gallery—where you felt all the time that you ought not to have brought me—and more strongly I felt obligation to you for having brought me—and the pleasure was the better for a little shame—and when the curtain drew up, what cared we for our place in the house, or what mattered it where we were sitting, when our thoughts were with Rosalind in Arden, or with Viola at the Court of Illyria? You used to say, that the Gallery was the best place of all for enjoying a play socially—that the relish of such exhibitions must be in proportion to the infrequency of going—that the company we met there, not being in general readers of plays, were obliged to attend the more, and did attend, to what was going on, on the stage—because a word lost would have been a chasm, which it was impossible for them to fill up. With such reflections we consoled our pride then—and I appeal to you, whether, as a woman, I met generally with less attention and accommodation, than I have done since in more expensive situations in the house? The getting in indeed, and the crowding up those inconvenient staircases, was bad enough,—but there was still a law of civility to woman recognised to quite as great an extent as we ever found in the other passages—and how a little difficulty overcome heightened the snug seat, and the play, afterwards! Now we can only pay our money and walk in. You cannot see, you say, in the galleries now. I am sure we saw, and heard too, well enough then—but sight, and all, I think, is gone with our poverty.

"There was pleasure in eating strawberries, before they became quite common—in the first dish of peas, while they were yet dear—to have them for a nice supper, a treat. What treat can we have now? If we were to treat ourselves now—that is, to have dainties a little above our means, it would be selfish

and wicked. It is the very little more that we allow ourselves beyond what the actual poor can get at, that makes what I call a treat—when two people living together, as we have done, now and then indulge themselves in a cheap luxury, which both like; while each apologises, and is willing to take both halves of the blame to his single share. I see no harm in people making much of themselves in that sense of the word. It may give them a hint how to make much of others. But now—what I mean by the word—we never do make much of ourselves. None but the poor can do it. I do not mean the veriest poor of all, but persons as we were, just above poverty.

"I know what you were going to say, that it is mighty pleasant at the end of the year to make all meet,—and much ado we used to have every Thirty-first Night of December to account for our exceedings—many a long face did you make over your puzzled accounts, and in contriving to make it out how we had spent so much—or that we had not spent so much—or that it was impossible we should spend so much next year—and still we found our slender capital decreasing—but then, betwixt ways, and projects, and compromises of one sort or another, and talk of curtailing this charge, and doing without that for the future—and the hope that youth brings, and laughing spirits (in which you were never poor till now) we pocketed up our loss, and in conclusion, with 'lusty brimmers' (as you used to quote it out of *hearty cheerful Mr Cotton*, as you called him), we used to welcome in the 'coming guest.' Now we have no reckoning at all at the end of the old year—no flattering promises about the new year doing better for us."

Bridget is so sparing of her speech on most occasions, that when she gets into a rhetorical vein, I am careful how I interrupt it. I could not help,



" Poor gallery scramblers."

ver, smiling at the phantom of wealth which ar imagination had conjured up out of a clear ie of poor—hundred pounds a year. " It is true ere happier when we were poorer, but we were ounger, my cousin. I am afraid we must put ith the excess, for if we were to shake the lux into the sea, we should not much mend ves. That we had much to struggle with, as rew up together, we have reason to be most ful. It strengthened, and knit our compact . We could never have been what we have to each other, if we had always had the ency which you now complain of. The re- power—those natural dilations of the youthful which circumstances cannot straiten—with us ng since passed away. Competence to age is mentary youth, a sorry supplement indeed, but

I fear the best that is to be had. We must ride, where we formerly walked: live better, and lie softer—and shall be wise to do so—than we had means to do in those good old days you speak of. Yet could those days return—could you and I once more walk our thirty miles a-day—could Bannister and Mrs Bland again be young, and you and I be young to see them—could the good old one-shilling gallery days return—they are dreams, my cousin, now—but could you and I at this moment, instead of this quiet argument, by our well-carpeted fire-side, sitting on this luxurious sofa—be once more struggling up those inconvenient stair cases, pushed about, and squeezed, and elbowed by the poorest rabble of poor gallery scramblers—could I once more hear those anxious shrieks of yours—and the delicious *Thank God, we are safe*, which always followed when the topmost stair, conquered, let in the first light of the whole cheerful theatre down beneath us—I know not the fathom line that ever touched a descent so deep as I would be willing to bury more wealth in than Crœsus had, or the great Jew R—— is supposed to have, to purchase it. And now do just look at that merry little Chinese waiter holding an umbrella, big enough for a bed-tester, over the head of that pretty insipid half-Madonna-ish chit of a lady in that very blue summer house."



ONFESSIONS OF A DRUNKARD

IORTATIONS from the use of strong iquors have been the favourite topic of sober rs in all ages, and have been received with ce of applause by water-drinking critics. n the patient himself, the man that is to be nfortunately their sound has seldom prevailed. evil is acknowledged, the remedy simple.

No force can oblige a man to raise the his head against his will. 'Tis as easy as not not to tell lies.

the hand to pilfer, and the tongue to bear

false witness, have no constitutional tendency. These are actions indifferent to them. At the first instance of the reformed will, they can be brought off without a murmur. The itching finger is but a figure in speech, and the tongue of the liar can with the same natural delight give forth useful truths, with which it has been accustomed to scatter their pernicious contraries. But when a man has commenced sot——

O pause, thou sturdy moralist, thou person of stout nerves and a strong head, whose liver is happily untouched, and ere thy gorge riseth at the *name* which I have written, first learn what the *thing* is; how much of compassion, how much of human allowance, thou mayst virtuously mingle with thy disapprobation. Trample not on the ruins of a man. Exact not, under so terrible a penalty as infamy, a resuscitation from a state of death almost as real as that from which Lazarus rose not but by a miracle.

Begin a reformation, and custom will make it easy. But what if the beginning be dreadful, the first steps not like climbing a mountain, but going through fire? what if the whole system must undergo a change violent as that which we conceive of the mutation of form in some insects? what if a process comparable to flaying alive be to be gone through? is the weakness that sinks under such struggles to be confounded with the pertinacity which clings to other vices, which have induced no constitutional necessity, no engagement of the whole victim, body and soul?

I have known one in that state, when he has tried to abstain but for one evening,—though the poisonous potion had long ceased to bring back its first enchantments, though he was sure it would rather deepen his gloom than brighten it,—in the violence of the struggle, and the necessity he has felt of getting rid of

the present sensation at any rate, I have known him to scream out, to cry aloud, for the anguish and pain of the strife within him.

Why should I hesitate to declare, that the man of whom I speak is myself? I have no puling apology to make to mankind. I see them all in one way or another deviating from the pure reason. It is to my own nature alone I am accountable for the woe that I have brought upon it.

I believe that there are constitutions, robust heads and iron insides, whom scarce any excesses can hurt; whom brandy (I have seen them drink it like wine), at all events whom wine, taken in ever so plentiful measure, can do no worse injury to than just to muddle their faculties, perhaps never very pellucid. On them this discourse is wasted. They would but laugh at a weak brother, who, trying his strength with them, and coming off foiled from the contest, would fain persuade them that such agonistic exercises are dangerous. It is to a very different description of persons I speak. It is to the weak, the nervous; to those who feel the want of some artificial aid to raise their spirits in society to what is no more than the ordinary pitch of all around them without it. This is the secret of our drinking. Such must fly the convivial board in the first instance, if they do not mean to sell themselves for term of life.

Twelve years ago I had completed my six-and-twentieth year. I had lived from the period of leaving school to that time pretty much in solitude. My companions were chiefly books, or at most one or two living ones of my own book-loving and sober stamp. I rose early, went to bed betimes, and the faculties which God had given me, I have reason to think, did not rust in me unused.

About that time I fell in with some companions of a different order. They were men of boisterous

spirits, sitters up a-nights, disputants, drunken; yet seemed to have something noble about them. We dealt about the wit, or what passes for it after midnight, jovially. Of the quality called fancy I certainly possessed a larger share than my companions. Encouraged by their applause, I set up for a professed joker! I, who of all men am least fitted for such an occupation, having, in addition to the greatest difficulty which I experience at all times of finding words to express my meaning, a natural nervous impediment in my speech!

Reader, if you are gifted with nerves like mine, aspire to any character but that of a wit. When you find a tickling relish upon your tongue disposing you to that sort of conversation, especially if you find a preternatural flow of ideas setting in upon you at the sight of a bottle and fresh glasses, avoid giving way to it as you would fly your greatest destruction. If you cannot crush the power of fancy, or that within you which you mistake for such, divert it, give it some other play. Write an essay, pen a character or description,—but not as I do now, with tears trickling down your cheeks.

To be an object of compassion to friends, of derision to foes; to be suspected by strangers, stared at by fools; to be esteemed dull when you cannot be witty, to be applauded for witty when you know that you have been dull; to be called upon for the extemporaneous exercise of that faculty which no premeditation can give; to be spurred on to efforts which end in contempt; to be set on to provoke mirth which procures the procurer hatred; to give pleasure and be paid with squinting malice; to swallow draughts of life-destroying wine which are to be distilled into airy breath to tickle vain auditors; to mortgage miserable morrows for nights of madness; to waste whole seas of time upon those who pay it back in little incon-

siderable drops of grudging applause,—are the wages of buffoonery and death.

Time, which has a sure stroke at dissolving all connexions which have no solider fastening than this liquid cement, more kind to me than my own taste or penetration, at length opened my eyes to the supposed qualities of my first friends. No trace of them is left but in the vices which they introduced, and the habits they infixed. In them my friends survive still, and exercise ample retribution for any supposed infidelity that I may have been guilty of towards them.

My next more immediate companions were and are persons of such intrinsic and felt worth, that though accidentally their acquaintance has proved pernicious to me, I do not know that if the thing were to do over again, I should have the courage to eschew the mischief at the price of forfeiting the benefit. I came to them reeking from the steams of my late over-heated notions of companionship; and the slightest fuel which they unconsciously afforded, was sufficient to feed my old fires into a propensity.

They were no drinkers, but, one from professional habits, and another from a custom derived from his father, smoked tobacco. The devil could not have devised a more subtle trap to re-take a backsliding penitent. The transition, from gulping down draughts of liquid fire to puffing out innocuous blasts of dry smoke, was so like cheating him. But he is too hard for us when we hope to commute. He beats us at barter; and when we think to set off a new failing against an old infirmity, 'tis odds but he puts the trick upon us of two for one. That (comparatively) white devil of tobacco brought with him in the end seven worse than himself.

It were impertinent to carry the reader through all the processes by which, from smoking at first with

malt liquor, I took my degrees through thin wines, through stronger wine and water, through small punch, to those juggling compositions, which, under the name of mixed liquors, slur a great deal of brandy or other poison under less and less water continually, until they come next to none, and so to none at all. But it is hateful to disclose the secrets of my Tartarus.

I should repel my readers, from a mere incapacity of believing me, were I to tell them what tobacco has been to me, the drudging service which I have paid, the slavery which I have vowed to it. How, when I have resolved to quit it, a feeling as of ingratitude has started up; how it has put on personal claims and made the demands of a friend upon me. How the reading of it casually in a book, as where Adams takes his whiff in the chimney-corner of some inn in Joseph Andrews, or Piscator in the Complete Angler breaks his fast upon a morning pipe in that delicate room *Piscatoribus Sacrum*, has in a moment broken down the resistance of weeks. How a pipe was ever in my midnight path before me, till the vision forced me to realise it,—how then its ascending vapours curled, its fragrance lulled, and the thousand delicious ministerings conversant about it, employing every faculty, extracted the sense of pain. How from illuminating it came to darken, from a quick solace it turned to a negative relief, thence to a restlessness and dissatisfaction, thence to a positive misery. How, even now, when the whole secret stands confessed in all its dreadful truth before me, I feel myself linked to it beyond the power of revocation. Bone of my bone——

Persons not accustomed to examine the motives of their actions, to reckon up the countless nails that rivet the chains of habit, or perhaps being bound by none so obdurate as those I have confessed to, may recoil


A morning pipe

from this as from an overcharged picture. But what short of such a bondage is it, which in spite of protesting friends, a weeping wife, and a reprobating world, chains down many a poor fellow, of no original indisposition to goodness, to his pipe and his pot?

I have seen a print after Correggio, in which three female figures are ministering to a man who sits fast bound at the root of a tree. Sensuality is soothing him, Evil Habit is nailing him to a branch, and Repugnance at the same instant of time is applying a snake to his side. In his face is feeble delight, the recollection of past rather than perception of present pleasures, languid enjoyment of evil with utter imbecility to good, a Sybaritic effeminacy, a submission to bondage, the springs of the will gone down like a broken clock, the sin and the suffering co-instantaneous, or the latter forerunning the former, remorse preceding action—all this represented in one point of time.—When I saw this, I admired the wonderful skill of the painter. But when I went away, I wept, because I thought of my own condition.

Of *that* there is no hope that it should ever change. The waters have gone over me. But out of the black depths, could I be heard, I would cry out to all those who have but set a foot in the perilous flood. Could the youth, to whom the flavour of his first wine is delicious as the opening scenes of life or the entering upon some newly discovered paradise, look into my desolation, and be made to understand what a dreary thing it is when a man shall feel himself going down a precipice with open eyes and a passive will,—to see his destruction and have no power to stop it, and yet to feel it all the way emanating from himself; to perceive all goodness emptied out of him, and yet not to be able to forget a time when it was otherwise; to bear about the piteous spectacle of his own self-

ruins:—could he see my fevered eye, feverish with last night's drinking, and feverishly looking for this night's repetition of the folly; could he feel the body of the death out of which I cry hourly with feebler and feebler outcry to be delivered,—it were enough to make him dash the sparkling beverage to the earth in all the pride of its mantling temptation; to make him clasp his teeth,

and not undo 'em
To suffer WET DAMNATION to run thro' 'em.

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siderable drops of grudging applause,—are the wages of buffoonery and death.

Time, which has a sure stroke at dissolving all connexions which have no solider fastening than this liquid cement, more kind to me than my own taste or penetration, at length opened my eyes to the supposed qualities of my first friends. No trace of them is left but in the vices which they introduced, and the habits they infixed. In them my friends survive still, and exercise ample retribution for any supposed infidelity that I may have been guilty of towards them.

My next more immediate companions were and are persons of such intrinsic and felt worth, that though accidentally their acquaintance has proved pernicious to me, I do not know that if the thing were to do over again, I should have the courage to eschew the mischief at the price of forfeiting the benefit. I came to them reeking from the steams of my late over-heated notions of companionship; and the slightest fuel which they unconsciously afforded, was sufficient to feed my old fires into a propensity.

They were no drinkers, but, one from professional habits, and another from a custom derived from his father, smoked tobacco. The devil could not have devised a more subtle trap to re-take a backsliding penitent. The transition, from gulping down draughts of liquid fire to puffing out innocuous blasts of dry smoke, was so like cheating him. But he is too hard for us when we hope to commute. He beats us at barter; and when we think to set off a new failing against an old infirmity, 'tis odds but he puts the trick upon us of two for one. That (comparatively) white devil of tobacco brought with him in the end seven worse than himself.

It were impertinent to carry the reader through all the processes by which, from smoking at first with

malt liquor, I took my degrees through thin wines, through stronger wine and water, through small punch, to those juggling compositions, which, under the name of mixed liquors, slur a great deal of brandy or other poison under less and less water continually, until they come next to none, and so to none at all. But it is hateful to disclose the secrets of my Tartarus.

I should repel my readers, from a mere incapacity of believing me, were I to tell them what tobacco has been to me, the drudging service which I have paid, the slavery which I have vowed to it. How, when I have resolved to quit it, a feeling as of ingratitude has started up; how it has put on personal claims and made the demands of a friend upon me. How the reading of it casually in a book, as where Adams takes his whiff in the chimney-corner of some inn in Joseph Andrews, or Piscator in the Complete Angler breaks his fast upon a morning pipe in that delicate room *Piscatoribus Sacrum*, has in a moment broken down the resistance of weeks. How a pipe was ever in my midnight path before me, till the vision forced me to realise it,—how then its ascending vapours curled, its fragrance lulled, and the thousand delicious ministerings conversant about it, employing every faculty, extracted the sense of pain. How from illuminating it came to darken, from a quick solace it turned to a negative relief, thence to a restlessness and dissatisfaction, thence to a positive misery. How, even now, when the whole secret stands confessed in all its dreadful truth before me, I feel myself linked to it beyond the power of revocation. Bone of my bone——

Persons not accustomed to examine the motives of their actions, to reckon up the countless nails that rivet the chains of habit, or perhaps being bound by none so obdurate as those I have confessed to, may recoil


A morning pipe

om this as from an overcharged picture. But what ort of such a bondage is it, which in spite of pro-sting friends, a weeping wife, and a reprobating orld, chains down many a poor fellow, of no original disposition to goodness, to his pipe and his pot?

I have seen a print after Correggio, in which three male figures are ministering to a man who sits fast ound at the root of a tree. Sensuality is soothing im, Evil Habit is nailing him to a branch, and epugnance at the same instant of time is applying snake to his side. In his face is feeble delight, e recollection of past rather than perception of resent pleasures, languid enjoyment of evil with tter imbecility to good, a Sybaritic effeminacy, a bmission to bondage, the springs of the will gone own like a broken clock, the sin and the suffering o-instantaneous, or the latter forerunning the former, morse preceding action—all this represented in one oint of time.—When I saw this, I admired the onderful skill of the painter. But when I went way, I wept, because I thought of my own ndition.

Of *that* there is no hope that it should ever change. he waters have gone over me. But out of the black pths, could I be heard, I would cry out to all those ho have but set a foot in the perilous flood. Could e youth, to whom the flavour of his first wine is licious as the opening scenes of life or the entering pon some newly discovered paradise, look into my esolation, and be made to understand what a dreary ing it is when a man shall feel himself going down precipice with open eyes and a passive will,—to see is destruction and have no power to stop it, and yet feel it all the way emanating from himself; to erceive all goodness emptied out of him, and yet not be able to forget a time when it was otherwise; bear about the piteous spectacle of his own self-

ruins:—could he see my fevered eye, feverish with last night's drinking, and feverishly looking for this night's repetition of the folly; could he feel the body of the death out of which I cry hourly with feebler and feebler outcry to be delivered,—it were enough to make him dash the sparkling beverage to the earth in all the pride of its mantling temptation; to make him clasp his teeth,

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:r doubted his courage? Even the poets—upon ıom this equitable distribution of qualities should most binding—have thought it agreeable to nature depart from the rule upon occasion. Harapha, in : "Agonistes," is indeed a bully upon the received tions. Milton has made him at once a blusterer, giant, and a dastard. But Almanzor, in Dryden, ks of driving armies singly before him—and does Tom Brown had a shrewder insight into this nd of character than either of his predecessors. He vides the palm more equably, and allows his hero a rt of dimidiate pre-eminence:—"Bully Dawson cked by half the town, and half the town kicked by ully Dawson." This was true distributive justice.

II.

THAT ILL-GOTTEN GAIN NEVER PROSPERS.

The weakest part of mankind have this saying mmonest in their mouth. It is the trite consolation ministered to the easy dupe, when he has been cked out of his money or estate, that the acquisition it will do the owner *no good*. But the rogues of is world—the prudenter part of them, at least—ow better; and, if the observation had been as ıe as it is old, would not have failed by this time have discovered it. They have pretty sharp stinctions of the fluctuating and the permanent. Lightly come, lightly go," is a proverb which they ın very well afford to leave, when they leave little se, to the losers. They do not always find manors, ot by rapine or chicanery, insensibly to melt away, s the poets will have it; or that all gold glides, like hawing snow, from the thief's hand that grasps it. Church land, alienated to lay uses, was formerly



"The first to be tickled with it."

denounced to have this slippery quality. But some portions of it somehow always stuck so fast, that the denunciators have been fain to postpone the prophecy of refundment to a late posterity.

III.

THAT A MAN MUST NOT LAUGH AT HIS OWN JEST.

The severest exaction surely ever invented upon the self-denial of poor human nature! This is to expect a gentleman to give a treat without partaking of it; to sit esurient at his own table, and commend the flavour of his venison upon the absurd strength of his never touching it himself. On the contrary, we love to see a wag *taste* his own joke to his party; to watch a quirk, or a merry conceit, flickering upon the lips some seconds before the tongue is delivered of it. If it be good, fresh, and racy—begotten of the occasion; if he that utters it never thought it before, he is naturally the first to be tickled with it;

ıy suppression of such complacence we hold to
ırlish and insulting. What does it seem to
but that your company is weak or foolish
h to be moved by an image or a fancy, that
stir you not at all, or but faintly? This is
y the humour of the fine gentleman in Mande-
vho, while he dazzles his guests with the display
ıe costly toy, affects himself to "see nothing
erable in it."

IV.

SUCH A ONE SHOWS HIS BREEDING.—THAT IT EASY TO PERCEIVE HE IS NO GENTLEMAN.

peech from the poorest sort of people, which
indicates that the party vituperated is a
man. The very fact which they deny, is that
galls and exasperates them to use this language.
orbearance with which it is usually received, is
f what interpretation the bystander sets upon it.
cin to this, and still less politic, are the phrases
vhich, in their street rhetoric, they ply one
r more grossly:—*He is a poor creature.—He*
a rag to cover——, *&c.*; though this last, we
, is more frequently applied by females to
s. They do not perceive that the satire
s upon themselves. A poor man, of all things
world, should not upbraid an antagonist with
y. Are there no other topics—as, to tell him
her was hanged—his sister, &c.——, without
ıg a secret, which should be kept snug between
and doing an affront to the order to which
ave the honour equally to belong? All this
they do not see how the wealthier man stands
laughs in his sleeve at both.

V.

THAT THE POOR COPY THE VICES OF THE RICH.

A smooth text to the latter; and, preached from the pulpit, is sure of a docile audience from the pews lined with satin. It is twice sitting upon velvet to a foolish squire to be told, that *he*—and not *perverse nature*, as the homilies would make us imagine, is the true cause of all the irregularities in his parish. This is striking at the root of free-will indeed, and denying the originality of sin in any sense. But men are not such implicit sheep as this comes to. If the abstinence from evil on the part of the upper classes is to derive itself from no higher principle, than the apprehension of setting ill patterns to the lower, we beg leave to discharge them from all squeamishness on that score: they may even take their fill of pleasures, where they can find them. The Genius of Poverty, hampered and straitened as it is, is not so barren of invention but it can trade upon the staple of its own vice, without drawing upon their capital. The poor are not quite such servile imitators as they take them for. Some of them are very clever artists in their way. Here and there we find an original. Who taught the poor to steal, to pilfer? They did not go to the great for schoolmasters in these faculties surely. It is well if in some vices they allow us to be—no copyists. In no other sense is it true that the poor copy them, than as servants may be said to *take after* their masters and mistresses, when they succeed to their reversionary cold meats. If the master, from indisposition or some other cause, neglect his food, the servant dines notwithstanding.

"O, but (some will say) the force of example is great." We knew a lady who was so scrupulous on this head, that she would put up with the calls of the



"She would put up with the calls of the most impertinent visitor."

most impertinent visitor, rather than let her servant say she was not at home, for fear of teaching her maid to tell an untruth; and this in the very face of the fact, which she knew well enough, that the wench was one of the greatest liars upon the earth without teaching; so much so, that her mistress possibly never heard two words of consecutive truth from her in her life. But nature must go for nothing: example must be everything. This liar in grain, who never opened her mouth without a lie, must be guarded against a remote inference, which she (pretty casuist!) might possibly draw from a form of words—literally false, but essentially deceiving no one—that under some circumstances a

fib might not be so exceedingly sinful—a fiction, too, not at all in her own way, or one that she could be suspected of adopting, for few servant-wenches care to be denied to visitors.

This word *example* reminds us of another fine word which is in use upon these occasions—*encouragement.* "People in our sphere must not be thought to give encouragement to such proceedings." To such a frantic height is this principle capable of being carried, that we have known individuals who have thought it within the scope of their influence to sanction despair, and give *eclat* to—suicide. A domestic in the family of a county member lately deceased, for love, or some unknown cause, cut his throat, but not successfully. The poor fellow was otherwise much loved and respected; and great interest was used in his behalf, upon his recovery, that he might be permitted to retain his place; his word being first pledged, not without some substantial sponsors to promise for him, that the like should never happen again. His master was inclinable to keep him, but his mistress thought otherwise; and John in the end was dismissed, her ladyship declaring that she "could not think of encouraging any such doings in the county."

VI.

THAT ENOUGH IS AS GOOD AS A FEAST.

Not a man, woman, or child in ten miles round Guildhall, who really believes this saying. The inventor of it did not believe it himself. It was made in revenge by somebody, who was disappointed of a regale. It is a vile cold-scrag-of-mutton sophism; a lie palmed upon the palate, which knows better things. If nothing else could be said for a

east, this is sufficient, that from the superflux there s usually something left for the next day. Morally nterpreted, it belongs to a class of proverbs, which ıave a tendency to make us undervalue *money*. Of his cast are those notable observations, that money s not health; riches cannot purchase everything; he metaphor which makes gold to be mere muck, vith the morality which traces fine clothing to the heep's back, and denounces pearl as the unhandsome :xcretion of an oyster. Hence, too, the phrase which mputes dirt to acres—a sophistry so barefaced, that ven the literal sense of it is true only in a wet season. This, and abundance of similar sage saws assuming o inculcate *content*, we verily believe to have been he invention of some cunning borrower, who had lesigns upon the purse of his wealthier neighbour, vhich he could only hope to carry by force of these 'erbal jugglings. Translate any one of these sayings ıut of the artful metonyme which envelopes it, and he trick is apparent. Goodly legs and shoulders of nutton, exhilarating cordials, books, pictures, the ıpportunities of seeing foreign countries, independ- :nce, heart's ease, a man's own time to himself, are ıot *muck*—however we may be pleased to scandalise vith that appellation the faithful metal that provides hem for us.

VII.

)F TWO DISPUTANTS, THE WARMEST IS GENERALLY IN THE WRONG.

Our experience would lead us to quite an opposite :onclusion. Temper, indeed, is no test of truth; ıut warmth and earnestness are a proof at least of a nan's own conviction of the rectitude of that which :e maintains. Coolness is as often the result of an nprincipled indifference to truth or falsehood, as of



"Your tall disputants have always the advantage."

a sober confidence in a man's own side in a dispute. Nothing is more insulting sometimes than the appearance of this philosophic temper. There is little Titubus, the stammering law-stationer in Lincoln's Inn—we have seldom known this shrewd little fellow engaged in an argument where we were not convinced he had the best of it, if his tongue would but fairly have seconded him. When he has been spluttering excellent broken sense for an hour together, writhing and labouring to be delivered of the point of dispute—the very gist of the controversy knocking at his teeth, which like some obstinate iron-grating still obstructed its deliverance—his puny frame convulsed, and face reddening all over at an unfairness in the logic which he wanted articulation

to expose, it has moved our gall to see a smooth portly fellow of an adversary, that cared not a button for the merits of the question, by merely laying his hand upon the head of the stationer, and desiring him to be *calm* (your tall disputants have always the advantage), with a provoking sneer carry the argument clean from him in the opinion of all the by-standers, who have gone away clearly convinced that Titubus must have been in the wrong, because he was in a passion; and that Mr ——, meaning his opponent, is one of the fairest, and at the same time one of the most dispassionate arguers breathing.

VIII.

THAT VERBAL ALLUSIONS ARE NOT WIT, BECAUSE THEY WILL NOT BEAR A TRANSLATION.

The same might be said of the wittiest local allusions. A custom is sometimes as difficult to explain to a foreigner as a pun. What would become of a great part of the wit of the last age, if it were tried by this test? How would certain topics, as aldermanity, cuckoldry, have sounded to a Terentian auditory, though Terence himself had been alive to translate them? *Senator urbanus*, with *Curruca* to boot for a synonyme, would but faintly have done the business. Words, involving notions, are hard enough to render; it is too much to expect us to translate a sound, and give an elegant version to a jingle. The Virgilian harmony is not translatable, but by substituting harmonious sounds in another language for it. To Latinise a pun, we must seek a pun in Latin, that will answer to it; as, to give an idea of the double endings in Hudibras, we must have recourse to a similar practice in the old monkish doggrel. Dennis, the fiercest oppugner of puns in

ancient or modern times, professes himself highly tickled with the "a stick" chiming to "ecclesiastic." Yet what is this but a species of pun, a verbal consonance?

IX.

THAT THE WORST PUNS ARE THE BEST.

If by worst be only meant the most far-fetched and startling, we agree to it. A pun is not bound by the laws which limit nicer wit. It is a pistol let off at the ear; not a feather to tickle the intellect. It is an antic which does not stand upon manners, but comes bounding into the presence, and does not show the less comic for being dragged in sometimes by the head and shoulders. What though it limp a little, or prove defective in one leg—all the better. A pun may easily be too curious and artificial. Who has not at one time or other been at a party of professors (himself perhaps an old offender in that line), where, after ringing a round of the most ingenious conceits, every man contributing his shot, and some there the most expert shooters of the day; after making a poor *word* run the gauntlet till it is ready to drop; after hunting and winding it through all the possible ambages of similar sounds; after squeezing and hauling, and tugging at it, till the very milk of it will not yield a drop further,—suddenly some obscure, unthought-of fellow in a corner, who was never 'prentice to the trade, whom the company for very pity passed over, as we do by a known poor man when a money-subscription is going round, no one calling upon him for his quota—has all at once come out with something so whimsical, yet so pertinent; so brazen in its pretensions, yet so impossible to be denied; so exquisitely good, and so deplorably bad, at the same

time,—that it has proved a Robin Hood's shot; any thing ulterior to that is despaired of; and the party breaks up, unanimously voting it to be the very worst (that is, best) pun of the evening. This species of wit is the better for not being perfect in all its parts. What it gains in completeness, it loses in naturalness. The more exactly it satisfies the critical, the less hold it has upon some other faculties. The puns which are most entertaining are those which will least bear an analysis. Of this kind is the following, recorded with a sort of stigma, in one of Swift's Miscellanies.

An Oxford scholar, meeting a porter who was carrying a hare through the streets, accosts him with this extraordinary question: "Prithee, friend, is that thy own hare, or a wig?"

There is no excusing this, and no resisting it. A man might blur ten sides of paper in attempting a defence of it against a critic who should be laughter-proof. The quibble in itself is not considerable. It is only a new turn given, by a little false pronunciation, to a very common, though not very courteous inquiry. Put by one gentleman to another at a dinner-party, it would have been vapid; to the mistress of the house, it would have shown much less wit than rudeness. We must take in the totality of time, place, and person; the pert look of the inquiring scholar, the desponding looks of the puzzled porter; the one stopping at leisure, the other hurrying on with his burthen; the innocent though rather abrupt tendency of the first member of the question, with the utter and inextricable irrelevancy of the second; the place—a public street, not favourable to frivolous investigations; the affrontive quality of the primitive inquiry (the common question) invidiously transferred to the derivative (the new turn given to it) in the implied satire; namely, that few of that



"Prithee, friend, is that thy own hare, or a wig?"

tribe are expected to eat of the good things which they carry, they being in most countries considered rather as the temporary trustees than owners of such dainties,—which the fellow was beginning to understand; but then the *wig* again comes in, and he can make nothing of it; all put together constitute a picture: Hogarth could have made it intelligible on canvas.

Yet nine out of ten critics will pronounce this a very bad pun, because of the defectiveness in the concluding member, which is its very beauty, and constitutes the surprise. The same persons shall cry up for admirable the cold quibble from Virgil about

the broken Cremona[1]; because it is made out in all its parts, and leaves nothing to the imagination. We venture to call it cold; because of thousands who have admired it, it would be difficult to find one who has heartily chuckled at it. As appealing to the judgment merely (setting the risible faculty aside), we must pronounce it a monument of curious felicity. But as some stories are said to be too good to be true, it may with equal truth be asserted of this bi-verbal allusion, that it is too good to be natural. One cannot help suspecting that the incident was invented to fit the line. It would have been better had it been less perfect. Like some Virgilian hemistichs, it has suffered by filling up. The *nimium Vicina* was enough in conscience; the *Cremonæ* afterwards loads it. It is in fact a double pun; and we have always observed that a superfœtation in this sort of wit is dangerous. When a man has said a good thing, it is seldom politic to follow it up. We do not care to be cheated a second time; or, perhaps, the mind of man (with reverence be it spoken) is not capacious enough to lodge two puns at a time. The impression, to be forcible, must be simultaneous and undivided.

X.

THAT HANDSOME IS THAT HANDSOME DOES.

Those who use this proverb can never have seen Mrs Conrady.

The soul, if we may believe Plotinus, is a ray from the celestial beauty. As she partakes more or less of this heavenly light, she informs, with corresponding characters, the fleshly tenement which she chooses, and frames to herself a suitable mansion.

[1] Swift.

All which only proves that the soul of Mrs Conrady, in her pre-existent state, was no great judge of architecture.

To the same effect, in a Hymn in honour of Beauty, divine Spenser *platonising*, sings :—

> "——— Every spirit as it is more pure
> And hath in it the more of heavenly light,
> So it the fairer body doth procure
> To habit in, and it more fairly dight
> With cheerful grace and amiable sight.
> For of the soul the body form doth take :
> For soul is form and doth the body make."

But Spenser, it is clear, never saw Mrs Conrady.

These poets, we find, are no safe guides in philosophy ; for here, in his very next stanza but one, is a saving clause, which throws us all out again, and leaves us as much to seek as ever :—

> "Yet oft it falls, that many a gentle mind
> Dwells in deformed tabernacle drown'd,
> Either by chance, against the course of kind,
> Or through unaptness in the substance found,
> Which it assumed of some stubborn ground,
> That will not yield unto her form's direction,
> But is performed with some foul imperfection."

From which it would follow, that Spenser had seen somebody like Mrs Conrady.

The spirit of this good lady—her previous *anima*—must have stumbled upon one of these untoward tabernacles which he speaks of. A more rebellious commodity of clay for a ground, as the poet calls it, no gentle mind—and sure hers is one of the gentlest—ever had to deal with.

Pondering upon her inexplicable visage—inexplicable, we mean, but by this modification of the theory—we have come to a conclusion that, if one must be plain, it is better to be plain all over, than, amidst a tolerable residue of features, to hang out one that shall be exceptionable. No one can say of Mrs Conrady's

countenance that it would be better if she had but a nose. It is impossible to pull her to pieces in this manner. We have seen the most malicious beauties of her own sex baffled in the attempt at a selection. The *tout ensemble* defies particularising. It is too complete—too consistent, as we may say—to admit of these invidious reservations. It is not as if some Apelles had picked out here a lip—and there a chin—out of the collected ugliness of Greece, to frame a model by. It is a symmetrical whole. We challenge the minutest connoisseur to cavil at any part or parcel of the countenance in question; to say that this, or that, is improperly placed. We are convinced that true ugliness, no less than is affirmed of true beauty, is the result of harmony. Like that too it reigns without a competitor. No one ever saw Mrs Conrady without pronouncing her to be the plainest woman that he ever met with in the course of his life. The first time that you are indulged with a sight of her face, is an era in your existence ever after. You are glad to have seen it—like Stonehenge. No one can pretend to forget it. No one ever apologised to her for meeting her in the street on such a day and not knowing her: the pretext would be too bare. Nobody can mistake her for another. Nobody can say of her, "I think I have seen that face somewhere, but I cannot call to mind where." You must remember that in such a parlour it first struck you—like a bust. You wondered where the owner of the house had picked it up. You wondered more when it began to move its lips—so mildly too! No one ever thought of asking her to sit for her picture. Lockets are for remembrance; and it would be clearly superfluous to hang an image at your heart, which, once seen, can never be out of it. It is not a mean face either; its entire originality precludes that. Neither is it of that order of plain faces which

improve upon acquaintance. Some very good but ordinary people, by an unwearied perseverance in good offices, put a cheat upon our eyes; juggle our senses out of their natural impressions; and set us upon discovering good indications in a countenance, which at first sight promised nothing less. We detect gentleness, which had escaped us, lurking about an under lip. But when Mrs Conrady has done you a service, her face remains the same; when she has done you a thousand, and you know that she is ready to double the number, still it is that individual face. Neither can you say of it, that it would be a good face if it were not marked by the small pox—a compliment which is always more admissive than excusatory—for either Mrs Conrady never had the small pox: or, as we say, took it kindly. No, it stands upon its own merits fairly. There it is. It is her mark, her token; that which she is known by.

XI.

THAT WE MUST NOT LOOK A GIFT-HORSE IN THE MOUTH.

Nor a lady's age in the parish register. We hope we have more delicacy than to do either; but some faces spare us the trouble of these *dental* inquiries. And what if the beast, which my friend would force upon my acceptance, prove, upon the face of it, a sorry Rosinante, a lean, ill-favoured jade, whom no gentleman could think of setting up in his stables? Must I, rather than not be obliged to my friend, make her a companion to Eclipse or Lightfoot? A horse-giver, no more than a horse-seller, has a right to palm his spavined article upon us for good ware. An equivalent is expected in either case; and, with my own good will, I would no more be cheated out

of my thanks than out of my money. Some people have a knack of putting upon you gifts of no real value, to engage you to substantial gratitude. We thank them for nothing. Our friend Mitis carries this humour of never refusing a present, to the very point of absurdity—if it were possible to couple the ridiculous with so much mistaken delicacy, and real good nature. Not an apartment in his fine house (and he has a true taste in household decorations), but is stuffed up with some preposterous print or mirror—the worst adapted to his pannels that may be —the presents of his friends that know his weakness; while his noble Vandykes are displaced, to make room for a set of daubs, the work of some wretched artist of his acquaintance, who, having had them returned upon his hands for bad likenesses, finds his account in bestowing them here gratis. The good creature has not the heart to mortify the painter at the expense of an honest refusal. It is pleasant (if it did not vex one at the same time) to see him sitting in his dining parlour, surrounded with obscure aunts and cousins to God knows whom, while the true Lady Marys and Lady Bettys of his own honourable family, in favour to these adopted frights, are consigned to the staircase and the lumber-room. In like manner his goodly shelves are one by one stript of his favourite old authors, to give place to a collection of presentation copies—the flour and bran of modern poetry. A presentation copy, reader,—if haply you are yet innocent of such favours—is a copy of a book which does not sell, sent you by the author, with his foolish autograph at the beginning of it; for which, if a stranger, he only demands your friendship; if a brother author he expects from you a book of yours, which does sell, in return. We can speak to experience, having by us a tolerable assortment of these gift-horses. Not to ride a metaphor to death—we are willing to acknow-

ledge, that in some gifts there is sense. A duplicate out of a friend's library (where he has more than one copy of a rare author) is intelligible. There are favours, short of the pecuniary—a thing not fit to be hinted at among gentlemen—which confer as much grace upon the acceptor as the offerer; the kind, we confess, which is most to our palate, is of those little conciliatory missives, which for their vehicle generally choose a hamper—little odd presents of game, fruit, perhaps wine—though it is essential to the delicacy of the latter that it be home-made. We love to have our friend in the country sitting thus at our table by proxy; to apprehend his presence (though a hundred miles may be between us) by a turkey, whose goodly aspect reflects to us his "plump corpusculum;" to taste him in grouse or woodcock; to feel him gliding down in the toast peculiar to the latter: to concorporate him in a slice of Canterbury brawn. This is indeed to have him within ourselves; to know him intimately: such participation is methinks unitive, as the old theologians phrase it. For these considerations we should be sorry if certain restrictive regulations, which are thought to bear hard upon the peasantry of this country, were entirely done away with. A hare, as the law now stands, makes many friends. Caius conciliates Titius (knowing his *goût*) with a leash of partridges. Titius (suspecting his partiality for them) passes them to Lucius; who in his turn, preferring his friend's relish to his own, makes them over to Marcius; till in their ever widening progress, and round of unconscious circum-migration, they distribute the seeds of harmony over half a parish. We are well disposed to this kind of sensible remembrances; and are the less apt to be taken by those little airy tokens—impalpable to the palate—which, under the names of rings, lockets, keep-sakes, amuse some people's fancy mightily. We



"He takes an interest in the dressing of it"

could never away with these indigestible trifles. They are the very kickshaws and foppery of friendship.

XII.

THAT HOME IS HOME THOUGH IT IS NEVER SO HOMELY.

Homes there are, we are sure, that are no homes; the home of the very poor man, and another which we shall speak to presently. Crowded places of cheap entertainment, and the benches of ale-houses, if they could speak, might bear mournful testimony to the first. To them the very poor man resorts for an image of the home, which he cannot find at home. For a starved grate, and a scanty firing, that is not enough to keep alive the natural heat in the fingers of so many shivering children with their mother, he finds in the depths of winter always a blazing hearth, and a hob to warm his pittance of beer by. Instead of the clamours of a wife, made gaunt by famishing, he meets with a cheerful attendance beyond the merits of the trifle which he can afford to spend. He has companions which his home denies him, for the very poor man has no visitors. He can look into the goings on of the world, and speak a little to politics. At home there are no politics stirring, but the domestic. All interests, real or imaginary, all topics that should expand the mind of man, and connect him to a sympathy with general existence, are crushed in the absorbing considerations of food to be obtained for the family. Beyond the price of bread, news is senseless and impertinent. At home there is no larder. Here there is at least a show of plenty; and while he cooks his lean scrap of butcher's meat before the common bars, or munches his humbler cold viands, his relishing bread

and cheese with an onion, in a corner, where no one reflects upon his poverty, he has a sight of the substantial joint providing for the landlord and his family. He takes an interest in the dressing of it; and while he assists in removing the trivet from the fire, he feels that there is such a thing as beef and cabbage, which he was beginning to forget at home. All this while he deserts his wife and children. But what wife, and what children? Prosperous men, who object to this desertion, image to themselves some clean contented family like that which they go home to. But look at the countenance of the poor wives who follow and persecute their good man to the door of the public house, which he is about to enter, when something like shame would restrain him, if stronger misery did not induce him to pass the threshold. That face, ground by want, in which every cheerful, every conversable lineament has been long effaced by misery,—is that a face to stay at home with? is it more a woman, or a wild cat? alas! it is the face of the wife of his youth, that once smiled upon him. It can smile no longer. What comforts can it share? what burthens can it lighten? Oh, 'tis a fine thing to talk of the humble meal shared together! But what if there be no bread in the cupboard? The innocent prattle of his children takes out the sting of a man's poverty. But the children of the very poor do not prattle. It is none of the least frightful features in that condition, that there is no childishness in its dwellings. Poor people, said a sensible old nurse to us once, do not bring up their children; they drag them up. The little careless darling of the wealthier nursery, in their hovel is transformed betimes into a premature reflecting person. No one has time to dandle it, no one thinks it worth while to coax it, to soothe it, to toss it up and down, to humour it. There is none to kiss

away its tears. If it cries, it can only be beaten. It has been prettily said that "a babe is fed with milk and praise." But the aliment of this poor babe was thin, unnourishing; the return to its little baby-tricks, and efforts to engage attention, bitter ceaseless objurgation. It never had a toy, or knew what a coral meant. It grew up without the lullaby of nurses, it was a stranger to the patient fondle, the hushing caress, the attracting novelty, the costlier plaything, or the cheaper off-hand contrivance to divert the child; the prattled nonsense (best sense to it), the wise impertinencies, the wholesome lies, the apt story interposed, that puts a stop to present sufferings, and awakens the passions of young wonder. It was never sung to—no one ever told to it a tale of the nursery. It was dragged up, to live or to die as it happened. It had no young dreams. It broke at once into the iron realities of life. A child exists not for the very poor as any object of dalliance; it is only another mouth to be fed, a pair of little hands to be betimes inured to labour. It is the rival, till it can be the co-operator, for food with the parent. It is never his mirth, his diversion, his solace; it never makes him young again, with recalling his young times. The children of the very poor have no young times. It makes the very heart to bleed to overhear the casual street-talk between a poor woman and her little girl, a woman of the better sort of poor, in a condition rather above the squalid beings which we have been contemplating. It is not of toys, of nursery books, of summer holidays (fitting that age); of the promised sight, or play; of praised sufficiency at school. It is of mangling and clear-starching, of the price of coals, or of potatoes. The questions of the child, that should be the very out-pourings of curiosity in idleness, are marked with forecast and melancholy providence. It has come to be a woman,—before it



"It has learned to go to market."

was a child. It has learned to go to market; chaffers, it haggles, it envies, it murmurs; it is knowi acute, sharpened; it never prattles. Had we not rea to say, that the home of the very poor is no home

There is yet another home, which we are con-
:rained to deny to be one. It has a larder, which
ıe home of the poor man wants; its fireside con-
ɜniences, of which the poor dream not. But with
l this, it is no home. It is—the house of the man
ıat is infested with many visitors. May we be
anded for the veriest churl, if we deny our heart to
.e many noble-hearted friends that at times exchange
eir dwelling for our poor roof! It is not of guests
at we complain, but of endless, purposeless visitants;
oppers in, as they are called. We sometimes
onder from what sky they fall. It is the very
ror of the position of our lodging; its horoscopy
as ill calculated, being just situate in a medium—a
aguy suburban mid-space—fitted to catch idlers
om town or country. We are older than we were,
ıd age is easily put out of its way. We have fewer
nds in our glass to reckon upon, and we cannot
ook to see them drop in endlessly succeeding im-
ɜrtinences. At our time of life, to be alone some-
mes is as needful as sleep. It is the refreshing sleep
f the day. The growing infirmities of age manifest
ıemselves in nothing more strongly, than in an
ıveterate dislike of interruption. The thing which
ɾe are doing, we wish to be permitted to do. We
ave neither much knowledge nor devices; but there
re fewer in the place to which we hasten. We are
ıot willingly put out of our way, even at a game of
ıine-pins. While youth was, we had vast reversions
n time future; we are reduced to a present pittance,
ınd obliged to economise in that article. We bleed
away our moments now as hardly as our ducats.
We cannot bear to have our thin wardrobe eaten and
fretted into by moths. We are willing to barter our
good time with a friend, who gives us in exchange his
own. Herein is the distinction between the genuine
guest and the visitant. This latter takes your good

time, and gives you his bad in exchange. The guest is domestic to you as your good cat, or household bird; the visitant is your fly, that flaps in at your window, and out again, leaving nothing but a sense of disturbance, and victuals spoiled. The inferior functions of life begin to move heavily. We cannot concoct our food with interruptions. Our chief meal, to be nutritive, must be solitary. With difficulty we can eat before a guest; and never understood what the relish of public feasting meant. Meats have no sapor, nor digestion fair play, in a crowd. The unexpected coming in of a visitant stops the machine. There is a punctual generation who time their calls to the precise commencement of your dining-hour—not to eat—but to see you eat. Our knife and fork drop instinctively, and we feel that we have swallowed our latest morsel. Others again show their genius, as we have said, in knocking the moment you have just sat down to a book. They have a peculiar compassionate sneer, with which they "hope that they do not interrupt your studies." Though they flutter off the next moment, to carry their impertinences to the nearest student that they can call their friend, the tone of the book is spoiled; we shut the leaves, and, with Dante's lovers, read no more that day. It were well if the effect of intrusion were simply co-extensive with its presence; but it mars all the good hours afterwards. These scratches in appearance leave an orifice that closes not hastily. "It is a prostitution of the bravery of friendship," says worthy Bishop Taylor, "to spend it upon impertinent people, who are, it may be, loads to their families, but can never ease my loads." This is the secret of their gaddings, their visits, and morning calls. They too have homes, which are—no homes.

XIII.

AT YOU MUST LOVE ME AND LOVE MY DOG.

Good sir, or madam, as it may be—we most ıgly embrace the offer of your friendship. We have known your excellent qualities. We have ed to have you nearer to us; to hold you within ery innermost fold of our heart. We can have serve towards a person of your open and noble e. The frankness of your humour suits us ly. We have been long looking for such a d. Quick—let us disburthen our troubles into other's bosom—let us make our single joys by reduplication—But *yap, yap, yap!* what is confounded cur? he has fastened his tooth, which ne of the bluntest, just in the fleshy part of my

It is my dog, sir. You must love him for my Here, Test—Test—Test!"

But he has bitten me."

Ay, that he is apt to do, till you are better ac- ıted with him. I have had him three years. He r bites me."

ap, yap, yap!—"He is at it again."

Oh, sir, you must not kick him. He does not to be kicked. I expect my dog to be treated all the respect due to myself."

But do you always take him out with you, when go a friendship-hunting?"

Invariably. 'Tis the sweetest, prettiest, best- litioned animal. I call him my *test*—the touch- e by which I try a friend. No one can properly ıid to love me, who does not love him."

Excuse us, dear sir—or madam aforesaid—if ı further consideration we are obliged to decline

the otherwise invaluable offer of your friendship. We do not like dogs."

"Mighty well, sir—you know the conditions—you may have worse offers. Come along, Test."

The above dialogue is not so imaginary, but that, in the intercourse of life, we have had frequent occasions of breaking off an agreeable intimacy by reason of these canine appendages. They do not always come in the shape of dogs; they sometimes wear the more plausible and human character of kinsfolk, near acquaintances, my friend's friend, his partner, his wife, or his children. We could never yet form a friendship—not to speak of more delicate correspondences—however much to our taste, without the intervention of some third anomaly, some impertinent clog affixed to the relation—the understood *dog* in the proverb. The good things of life are not to be had singly, but come to us with a mixture; like a schoolboy's holiday, with a task affixed to the tail of it. What a delightful companion is * * * *, if he did not always bring his tall cousin with him! He seems to grow with him; like some of those double births which we remember to have read of with such wonder and delight in the old "Athenian Oracle," where Swift commenced author by writing Pindaric Odes (what a beginning for him!) upon Sir William Temple. There is the picture of the brother, with the little brother peeping out at his shoulder; a species of fraternity, which we have no name of kin close enough to comprehend. When * * * * comes, poking in his head and shoulder into your room, as if to feel his entry, you think, surely you have now got him to yourself—what a three-hours' chat we shall have!—but ever in the haunch of him, and before his diffident body is well disclosed in your apartment, appears the haunting shadow of the cousin, over-peering his modest kinsman, and sure



"Superfluous establishment of six boys."

to overlay the expected good talk with his insufferable procerity of stature, and uncorresponding dwarfishness of observation. Misfortunes seldom come alone. 'Tis hard when a blessing comes accompanied. Cannot we like Sempronia, without sitting down to chess with her eternal brother? or know Sulpicia, without knowing all the round of her card-playing relations? must my friend's brethren of necessity be mine also? must we be hand and glove with Dick Selby the parson, or Jack Selby the calico-printer, because W. S. who is neither, but a ripe wit and a critic, has the misfortune to claim a common parentage with them? Let him lay down his brothers; and 'tis odds but we will cast him in a pair of ours (we have a superflux) to balance the concession. Let F. H. lay down his garrulous uncle; and Honorius dismiss his vapid wife, and superfluous establishment of six boys: things between boy and manhood—too

ripe for play, too raw for conversation—that come in, impudently staring their father's old friend out of countenance; and will neither aid, nor let alone, the conference: that we may once more meet upon equal terms, as we were wont to do in the disengaged state of bachelorhood.

It is well if your friend, or mistress, be content with these canicular probations. Few young ladies but in this sense keep a dog. But when Rutilia hounds at you her tiger aunt; or Ruspina expects you to cherish and fondle her viper sister, whom she has preposterously taken into her bosom, to try stinging conclusions upon your constancy; they must not complain if the house be rather thin of suitors. Scylla must have broken off many excellent matches in her time, if she insisted upon all, that loved her, loving her dogs also.

An excellent story to this moral is told of Merry, of Della Cruscan memory. In tender youth, he loved and courted a modest appanage to the Opera, in truth a dancer, who had won him by the artless contrast between her manners and situation. She seemed to him a native violet, that had been transplanted by some rude accident into that exotic and artificial hotbed. Nor, in truth, was she less genuine and sincere than she appeared to him. He wooed and won this flower. Only for appearance' sake, and for due honour to the bride's relations, she craved that she might have the attendance of her friends and kindred at the approaching solemnity. The request was too amiable not to be conceded: and in this solicitude for conciliating the good-will of mere relations, he found a presage of her superior attentions to himself, when the golden shaft should have "killed the flock of all affections else." The morning came: and at the Star and Garter, Richmond—the place appointed for the breakfasting—accompanied with

one English friend, he impatiently awaited what reinforcements the bride should bring to grace the ceremony. A rich muster she had made. They came in six coaches—the whole corps du ballet—French, Italian, men and women. Monsieur De B., the famous *pirouetter* of the day, led his fair spouse, but craggy, from the banks of the Seine. The Prima Donna had sent her excuse. But the first and second Buffa were there; and Signor Sc—, and Signora Ch—, and Madame V—, with a countless cavalcade besides of chorusers, figurantes, at the sight of whom Merry afterwards declared, that "then for the first time it struck him seriously that he was about to marry—a dancer." But there was no help for it. Besides, it was her day; these were, in fact, her friends and kinsfolk. The assemblage, though whimsical, was all very natural. But when the bride—handing out of the last coach a still more extraordinary figure than the rest—presented to him as her *father*—the gentleman that was to *give her away*—no less a person than Signor Delpini himself—with a sort of pride, as much as to say, See what I have brought to do us honour!—the thought of so extraordinary a paternity quite overcame him; and slipping away under some pretence from the bride and her motley adherents, poor Merry took horse from the back yard to the nearest sea-coast, from which, shipping himself to America, he shortly after consoled himself with a more congenial match in the person of Miss Brunton; relieved from his intended clown father, and a bevy of painted Buffas for bridemaids.

XIV.

THAT WE SHOULD RISE WITH THE LARK.

At what precise minute that little airy musician doffs his night gear, and prepares to tune up his unseasonable matins, we are not naturalists enough to determine. But for a mere human gentleman—that has no orchestra business to call him from his warm bed to such preposterous exercises—we take ten, or half after ten (eleven, of course, during this Christmas solstice), to be the very earliest hour, at which he can begin to think of abandoning his pillow. To think of it, we say; for to do it in earnest, requires another half-hour's good consideration. Not but there are pretty sun-risings, as we are told, and such like gawds, abroad in the world, in summer time especially, some hours before what we have assigned; which a gentleman may see, as they say, only for getting up. But, having been tempted once or twice, in earlier life, to assist at those ceremonies, we confess our curiosity abated. We are no longer ambitious of being the sun's courtiers, to attend at his morning levees. We hold the good hours of the dawn too sacred to waste them upon such observances; which have in them, besides, something Pagan and Persic. To say truth, we never anticipated our usual hour, or got up with the sun (as 'tis called), to go a journey, or upon a foolish whole day's pleasuring, but we suffered for it all the long hours after in listlessness and headaches; Nature herself sufficiently declaring her sense of our presumption in aspiring to regulate our frail waking courses by the measures of that celestial and sleepless traveller. We deny not that there is something sprightly and vigorous, at the outset especially, in these break-of-day excursions. It is

flattering to get the start of a lazy world ; to conquer death by proxy in his image. But the seeds of sleep and mortality are in us ; and we pay usually in strange qualms, before night falls, the penalty of the unnatural inversion. Therefore, while the busy part of mankind are fast huddling on their clothes, are already up and about their occupations, content to have swallowed their sleep by wholesale ; we choose to linger a-bed, and digest our dreams. It is the very time to recombine the wandering images, which night in a confused mass presented ; to snatch them from forgetfulness ; to shape, and mould them. Some people have no good of their dreams. Like fast feeders, they gulp them too grossly, to taste them curiously. We love to chew the cud of a foregone vision ; to collect the scattered rays of a brighter phantasm, or act over again, with firmer nerves, the sadder nocturnal tragedies ; to drag into day-light a struggling and half-vanishing night-mare ; to handle and examine the terrors, or the airy solaces. We have too much respect for these spiritual communications, to let them go so lightly. We are not so stupid, or so careless, as that Imperial forgetter of his dreams, that we should need a seer to remind us of the form of them. They seem to us to have as much significance as our waking concerns ; or rather to import us more nearly, as more nearly we approach by years to the shadowy world, whither we are hastening. We have shaken hands with the world's business ; we have done with it ; we have discharged ourself of it. Why should we get up ? we have neither suit to solicit, nor affairs to manage. The drama has shut in upon us at the fourth act. We have nothing here to expect, but in a short time a sick bed, and a dismissal. We delight to anticipate death by such shadows as night affords. We are already half acquainted with ghosts. We were never much in the

world. Disappointment early struck a dark veil between us and its dazzling illusions. Our spirits showed grey before our hairs. The mighty changes of the world already appear as but the vain stuff out of which dramas are composed. We have asked no more of life than what the mimic images in playhouses present us with. Even those types have waxed fainter. Our clock appears to have struck. We are SUPERANNUATED. In this dearth of mundane satisfaction, we contract politic alliances with shadows. It is good to have friends at court. The abstracted media of dreams seem no ill introduction to that spiritual presence, upon which, in no long time, we expect to be thrown. We are trying to know a little of the usages of that colony; to learn the language, and the faces we shall meet with there, that we may be the less awkward at our first coming among them. We willingly call a phantom our fellow, as knowing we shall soon be of their dark companionship. Therefore, we cherish dreams. We try to spell in them the alphabet of the invisible world; and think we know already, how it shall be with us. Those uncouth shapes, which, while we clung to flesh and blood, affrighted us, have become familiar. We feel attenuated into their meagre essences, and have given the hand of half-way approach to incorporeal being. We once thought life to be something; but it has unaccountably fallen from us before its time. Therefore we choose to dally with visions. The sun has no purposes of ours to light us to. Why should we get up?

XV.

THAT WE SHOULD LIE DOWN WITH THE LAMB.

We could never quite understand the philosophy of this arrangement, or the wisdom of our ancestors in sending us for instruction to these woolly bedfellows. A sheep, when it is dark, has nothing to do but to shut his silly eyes, and sleep if he can. Man found out long sixes.—Hail candlelight! without disparagement to sun or moon, the kindliest luminary of the three—if we may not rather style thee their radiant deputy, mild viceroy of the moon!—We love to read, talk, sit silent, eat, drink, sleep, by candlelight. They are every body's sun and moon. This is our peculiar and household planet. Wanting it, what savage unsocial nights must our ancestors have spent, wintering in caves and unillumined fastnesses! They must have lain about and grumbled at one another in the dark. What repartees could have passed, when you must have felt about for a smile, and handled a neighbour's cheek to be sure that he understood it? This accounts for the seriousness of the elder poetry. It has a sombre cast (try Hesiod or Ossian), derived from the tradition of those unlantern'd nights. Jokes came in with candles. We wonder how they saw to pick up a pin, if they had any. How did they sup? what a melange of chance carving they must have made of it!—here one had got a leg of a goat, when he wanted a horse's shoulder—there another had dipt his scooped palm in a kid-skin of wild honey, when he meditated right mare's milk. There is neither good eating nor drinking in fresco. Who, even in these civilised times, has never experienced this, when at some economic table he has commenced dining after dusk,

and waited for the flavour till the lights came? The senses absolutely give and take reciprocally. Can you tell pork from veal in the dark? or distinguish Sherris from pure Malaga? Take away the candle from the smoking man; by the glimmering of the left ashes, he knows that he is still smoking, but he knows it only by an inference; till the restored light, coming in aid of the olfactories, reveals to both senses the full aroma. Then how he redoubles his puffs! how he burnishes!—There is absolutely no such thing as reading, but by a candle. We have tried the affectation of a book at noon-day in gardens, and sultry arbours; but it was labour thrown away. Those gay motes in the beam come about you, hovering and teasing, like so many coquettes, that will have you all to their self, and are jealous of your abstractions. By the midnight taper, the writer digests his meditations. By the same light, we must approach to their perusal, if we would catch the flame, the odour. It is a mockery, all that is reported of the influential Phœbus. No true poem ever owed its birth to the sun's light. They are abstracted works—

> "Things that were born, when none but the still night,
> And his dumb candle, saw his pinching throes."

Marry, daylight—daylight might furnish the images, the crude material; but for the fine shapings, the true turning and filing (as mine author hath it), they must be content to hold their inspiration of the candle. The mild internal light, that reveals them, like fires on the domestic hearth, goes out on the sunshine. Night and silence call out the starry fancies. Milton's Morning Hymn in Paradise, we would hold a good wager, was penned at midnight; and Taylor's rich description of a sun-rise smells decidedly of the taper. Even ourself, in these our



"A book ···· in sultry arbours"

humbler lucubrations, tune our best measured cadences (Prose has her cadences) not unfrequently to the charm of the drowsier watchman, "blessing the doors;" or the wild sweep of winds at midnight. Even now a loftier speculation than we have yet attempted, courts our endeavours. We would indite something about the Solar System.—*Betty, bring the candles.*

XVI.

THAT A SULKY TEMPER IS A MISFORTUNE.

We grant that it is, and a very serious one—to a man's friends, and to all that have to do with him; but whether the condition of the man himself is so much to be deplored, may admit of a question. We can speak a little to it, being ourself but lately recovered—we whisper it in confidence, reader—out of a long and desperate fit of the sullens. Was the cure a blessing? The conviction which wrought it, came too clearly to leave a scruple of the fanciful injuries—for they were mere fancies—which had provoked the humour. But the humour itself was too self-pleasing, while it lasted—we know how bare we lay ourself in the confession—to be abandoned all at once with the grounds of it. We still brood over wrongs which we know to have been imaginary; and for our old acquaintance, N——, whom we find to be a truer friend than we took him for, we substitute some phantom—a Caius or Titius—as like him as we dare to form it, to wreak our yet unsatisfied resentments on. It is mortifying to fall at once from the pinnacle of neglect; to forego the idea of having been ill-used and contumaciously treated by an old friend. The first thing to aggrandise a man in his own conceit, is to conceive of himself as neglected. There let him fix if he can. To undeceive him is

to deprive him of the most tickling morsel within the range of self-complacency. No flattery can come near it. Happy is he who suspects his friend of an injustice; but supremely blest, who thinks all his friends in a conspiracy to depress and undervalue him. There is a pleasure (we sing not to the profane) far beyond the reach of all that the world counts joy—a deep, enduring satisfaction in the depths, where the superficial seek it not, of discontent. Were we to recite one half of this mystery,—which we were let into by our late dissatisfaction, all the world would be in love with disrespect; we should wear a slight for a bracelet, and neglects and contumacies would be the only matter for courtship. Unlike to that mysterious book in the Apocalypse, the study of this mystery is unpalatable only in the commencement. The first sting of a suspicion is grievous; but wait—out of that wound, which to flesh and blood seemed so difficult, there is balm and honey to be extracted. Your friend passed you on such or such a day—having in his company one that you conceived worse than ambiguously disposed towards you,—passed you in the street without notice. To be sure he is something short-sighted; and it was in your power to have accosted *him*. But facts and sane inferences are trifles to a true adept in the science of dissatisfaction. He must have seen you; and S——, who was with him, must have been the cause of the contempt. It galls you, and well it may. But have patience. Go home, and make the worst of it, and you are a made man from this time. Shut yourself up, and—rejecting, as an enemy to your peace, every whispering suggestion that but insinuates there may be a mistake—reflect seriously upon the many lesser instances which you had begun to perceive, in proof of your friend's disaffection towards you. None of them singly was



" A serious misfortune to a man's friends."

uch to the purpose, but the aggregate weight is ositive; and you have this last affront to clench iem. Thus far the process is anything but agree- ble. But now to your relief comes in the compara- ve faculty. You conjure up all the kind feelings ou have had for your friend; what you have been o him, and what you would have been to him, if he ould have suffered you; how you defended him in is or that place; and his good name—his literary putation, and so forth, was always dearer to you an your own! Your heart, spite of itself, yearns wards him. You could weep tears of blood but r a restraining pride. How say you? do you not et begin to apprehend a comfort? some allay of weetness in the bitter waters? Stop not here, nor enuriously cheat yourself of your reversions.—You re on vantage ground. Enlarge your speculations, nd take in the rest of your friends, as a spark kindles ore sparks. Was there one among them, who has ot to you proved hollow, false, slippery as water?

Begin to think that the relation itself is inconsistent with mortality. That the very idea of friendship, with its component parts, as honour, fidelity, steadiness, exists but in your single bosom. Image yourself to yourself, as the only possible friend in a world incapable of that communion. Now the gloom thickens. The little star of self-love twinkles, that is to encourage you through deeper glooms than this. You are not yet at the half point of your elevation. You are not yet, believe me, half sulky enough. Adverting to the world in general, (as these circles in the mind will spread to infinity) reflect with what strange injustice you have been treated in quarters where (setting gratitude and the expectation of friendly returns aside as chimeras), you pretended no claim beyond justice, the naked due of all men. Think the very idea of right and fit fled from the earth, or your breast the solitary receptacle of it, till you have swelled yourself into at least one hemisphere; the other being the vast Arabia Stony of your friends and the world aforesaid. To grow bigger every moment in your own conceit, and the world to lessen: to deify yourself at the expense of your species; to judge the world—this is the acme and supreme point of your mystery—these the true PLEASURES of SULKINESS. We profess no more of this grand secret than what ourself experimented on one rainy afternoon in the last week, sulking in our study. We had proceeded to the penultimate point, at which the true adept seldom stops, where the consideration of benefit forgot is about to merge in the meditation of general injustice—when a knock at the door was followed by the entrance of the very friend, whose not seeing of us in the morning (for we will now confess the case our own), an accidental oversight, had given rise to so much agreeable generalisation! To mortify us still more, and take

down the whole flattering superstructure which pride had piled upon neglect, he had brought in his hand the identical S——, in whose favour we had suspected him of the contumacy. Asseverations were needless, where the frank manner of them both was convictive of the injurious nature of the suspicion. We fancied that they perceived our embarrassment; but were too proud, or something else, to confess to the secret of it. We had been but too lately in the condition of the noble patient in Argos:—

> Qui se credebat miros audire tragœdos,
> In vacuo laetus sessor plausorque theatro—

and could have exclaimed with equal reason against the friendly hands that cured us—

> Pol, me occidistis, amici,
> Non servâstis, ait; cui sic extorta voluptas,
> Et demptus per vim mentis gratissimus error.

NOTES TO
"LAST ESSAYS OF ELIA"

NOTES TO
"LAST ESSAYS OF ELIA"

By a Friend of the Late Elia

("London Magazine," January 1823)

A choice of reasons has been suggested why Lamb wrote this, though the most sufficient reason seems to be that it was like him to do it, and that the notion was favoured by the assumption of intimacy, of personal familiarity between writers and readers, which prevailed in the pages of the "London Magazine." There was an epidemic of playful deaths in that quarter just then; the pages were ghost-haunted; and presently were full of protests or explanations from persons in the Shades, declaring (like the poor brave fellow entombed in the ruins, what time a whole "land," or block of houses, collapsed in Old Edinburgh) that "I'm no deid yet!" We can hardly doubt, however, that Lamb meant by this declaration of his own death to free himself from the shackles which the character of Elia, he already felt, was putting upon the free play of his personality and his intellect. This feeling became still stronger a few years later, so much so that in the "Englishman's Magazine" he would not have a name at all, but had his contributions put under the general heading of *Peter's Net*, all being fish that came to him there. In the present instance, however, he did not at once effect his release; for in the March number he gave official denial to the report of his death, and continued his contributions with considerable regularity for two years more. But there can be little doubt as to his inclinations, for in that month (March 1823) he writes to Bernard Barton: "They have dragged me again into the Magazine; but I feel the spirit of the thing in my own mind quite gone." It is evident, also, that the article was intended to be used as a Preface to the "Essays of Elia," which were then in the press. He decided, however, that the book should have neither that Preface, nor another, which he had written in the form of a "Dedication to the Friendly and Judicious Reader." At the last minute he wrote to the publisher: "The Essays want no Preface: they are *all Preface*. . . . Let Elia come forth bare as he was born." And so he did; without even a name of his own.

But ten years later, when preparing the "Last Essays of Elia" for the press, he unearthed this buried article, cleaned it off, or cut it down, by about a third, and so gave it to the world in the form in which the reader finds it here. With Lamb, cancellation was no mere cutting down, but the finishing of a work of art; and so it was in this case. Nevertheless, to us in these later days, who delight to trace Charles Lamb in every line of his writing, there is in the discarded passages of this Essay much that it were a pity to lose. For this reason, and also because the article suits itself peculiarly well to the talent of Mr Brock, it will be reproduced in its original entirety, with illustrations by that artist, in vol. iv. of this Edition.

Blakesmoor in H——shire

("London Magazine," September 1824)

This was Blakesware, the family seat of the Plumers, and situated about five miles from Ware. For fifty years or more Lamb's maternal grandmother, Mrs Field, had been housekeeper here; and it was during their holiday visits to her that both Charles and Mary gathered those deep impressions of the place which have yielded so beautiful a literary transcript—enriched with the colours of time, the mellowings of imagination—both in this Essay and in Mary's Tale, entitled *Margaret Green* or *The Young Mahometan* (for which see "Mrs Leicester's School" in vol. vii. of this Edition). Even at that early time its owners had almost deserted Blakesware ("the home of their fathers") and had made their other house, at Gilston ("a newer trifle"), near Marlow, their principal seat. And what a great good fortune that was! since, however estimable the Plumers might be, their full occupancy of the place, and their filling it with a world of attendants and a whole machinery of duties and services, would have ruined its solitude, agitated its atmosphere, broken the spell of its magical, Spenserian stillness—and life there for little Mary and Charles Lamb would have been greatly different—and literature would have lost, how much! The devastation described in the opening of the Essay was witnessed on a return to those scenes in 1822. See also Lamb's letter to Bernard Barton, Aug. 10, 1827.

"*The garden-loving Poet.*" Marvell on Appleton House, to the Lord Fairfax. [Note by Lamb in "London Magazine."]

"*I was the true descendant of those old W——s.*" Here Lamb's mystification has in a curious way approximated to an actual fact, and so has begotten confusions. Blakesware came (by a third marriage of Mrs Plumer) into the possession of a Mr Ward, who thereupon changed his family name to Plumer-Ward; consequently, some editors have thought that the initial in the above passage was a slight veiling of the word "*Wards.*" Canon

Ainger has pointed out that this cannot well be, since the Wards did not come into the matter at all till some years after the Essay was written. In all probability that initial was suggested by the reference to "*my Alice*" lower down. Nor do I think we can safely take the said reference to Alice, and the Hertfordshire hair, as being at all documentary or tending to show that Alice (or Anna) lived thereabouts. Something must be allowed, in reading Lamb above most writers, for the play-impulse, the catching at momentary suggestions, the almost necessity (for Lamb) of diving down any vistas of conjectural mystification that a happy thought just penned might open to him—the half-psychological, half-elfish pleasure that he had in blazing his trail by marks that were sometimes indications and sometimes traps for the Reader who came after. The reference to Mrs Battle, for instance, in this very Essay, is not, I take it, addressed to our detective faculty (which shall worry it as a dog does a bone) but to our imagination. I shall have occasion to invite the Reader's attention to this matter again, in a Note in vol. iv.

Poor Relations

("London Magazine," May 1823)

In the early part of this Essay, especially the second paragraph, Lamb does something that is rather unusual with him—writes a little out of character; not *personal* character so much as *social* character. He seems, that is, to speak from the midst of a sort of *ménage* with which one does not readily associate him: a well-equipped house (with a staff of servants); where visitors come in a coach, or at least go off in one; where the furniture is worth talking of, and where there are forms to stand on as well as Chippendale chairs to sit upon: appearances to be kept up, and awkward moments when they break down. . . . Perhaps this rise in social tone was due to the influence of the preceding Essay, and a lingering sense of gentility. Here one cannot but remember Thackeray; who had a curious way, especially in his later writings, of assuming that, in the ordinary conditions of mankind, one naturally has an upper and under butler, at least *one* carriage-and-pair, and a palace in Kensington or Bayswater. We must lower the scale of the Essay a little, if we wish to get at the truth of the matter, the personal note: and for "poor relations" read sometimes "poor familiar friends," of whom Lamb had a goodly following.

"*Richard Amlet, Esq., in the play.*" Vanbrugh's comedy, "The Confederacy" (1695).

"*Poor W. was of my own standing at Christ's.*" He is referred to in the Essay *Christ's Hospital Five-and-Thirty Years Ago* as "F." In his Key, Lamb explained the initial thus: "F=Favell; left Cambridge because he was ashamed of his father, who was a

house-painter there." He and the younger Le Grice, while at Cambridge, wrote to the Duke of York *asking* commissions in the army; and received that fatal gift at once. The extra mystification as to the name in this Essay, and the substituting of Oxford for Cambridge, make it probable that old Favell himself, or—more probably—some son of his, was still in business in the Town in 1823; a fact of which, if it were so, Lamb would not be ignorant.

"*My father had been a leading Mountaineer.*" He must have arrived at eminence early, seeing that he left for London at the age of seven. He may, however, have accumulated distinction later by his services, as kindred ally and metropolitan auxiliary, during holiday visits to his home.

Stage Illusion

("London Magazine," August 1825)

One of Lamb's subtlest pieces of criticism; its subject not altogether identical with that question—which has been open from Diderot's day till now—as to whether the actor should "lose himself in his part." It depends on the kind of part, at least, Lamb would say; and in certain kinds of representation the actor, if he "lose himself" at all, must only lose himself in a part-and-a-half: the keeping up of a perpetual aside, a good understanding with the audience, being a subservient yet essential histrionic and temperamental achievement expected of the actor —not so much a part of his part, as the extraneous investing element which gives it vitality, the atmosphere round the planet.

To the Shade of Elliston

("Englishman's Magazine," August 1831)

This and the succeeding Essay (*Ellistoniana*) may be considered together. They both appeared in the same number of the "Englishman's Magazine," the one following the other, and were virtually one contribution broken up into two, to make a double display in the list of Contents. When preparing the "Last Essays of Elia" for the press, Lamb castigated those two a good deal, and they were the better literature for it.

Robert William Elliston, son of a watchmaker, was born in London in 1774. His education was provided for by an uncle, who was master of Pembroke College, Cambridge. This fact was a great part of the personality of Elliston all through life: hence, too, the Ellistonian language in which Lamb addresses the Shade; rendering it its dues of Latinity. Elliston ran away from home at the age of 17, turned actor, and soon drew attention. In 1796 he appeared at Covent Garden and the Haymarket, and then began his great period. After being of the Drury Lane

Company for many years (with intermissions) he became lessee and manager of that theatre in 1819; but was by the Proprietors "forced to abdicate" in 1826—rent, and such-like trifles, being long overdue. Lamb and Lamb's friends thought he was ungenerously treated, as the articles in the "London Magazine" at that time show.

"*In the Leamington Spa Library.*" From Raymond's "Life of Elliston" (1845) Mr Fitzgerald has extracted the following apposite passage:

"One morning he descended early into his shop, and looking round with the irresistible humour of Tangent himself, 'It is my cruel fate,' said he, 'that my children will be gentlemen.' One of the first customers that came in was a short, dirty-faced drab of a maid-servant, who brought some books to be exchanged; and nearly at the same moment a snivelling charity-boy, with a large patch of diachylon across his nose, placed himself at the counter demanding other articles. 'One at a time,' said Octavian, with petrifying solemnity. 'Now, madam?' pursued he, turning to the smut. 'Missis a sent back these here and wants summut 'orrible.' 'The lady's name?' demanded Elliston. 'Wivian,' grunted the girl. 'With a V or a W?' asked Elliston with the same solemnity; but the wench only grinned. When up mounted *Sir Edward Mortimer*, the ladder placed against his shelves, and withdrawing two wretchedly-torn volumes, clapping them together to liberate the dust, and placing them in the grubby claws of the now half-frightened girl, 'There,' said he, 'a work of surpassing terror; and now, sir,' turning to the boy, 'I will attend to you.'"

"*Sir A—— C——.*" Sir Anthony Carlisle, the surgeon, whom Lamb elsewhere describes as "the best story-teller I ever heard."

Detached Thoughts on Books and Reading

("London Magazine," July 1822)

Perhaps no single page contains so much of what is characteristic of Lamb's mind as do the four lines which make the second paragraph of this Essay. They are an epitome and index; and Lamb, feeling that the paragraph was oracular, kept it brief. The Reader may like to compare and contrast it with the motto from Sir Thomas Browne which heads the Essay on *Imperfect Sympathies:* the Moralist taking all mankind to be his fellow-countryman and his brother, the Critic taking all literature to be his proper book, his equal and innocent pastime—"Jonathan Wild not too low." But limitation is, in the end, a law of mind no less than it is the very mould and matrix of matter; and we may be sure that even as Lamb here takes exception to some printed things which are not (for him) *Books*, so Sir Thomas

Browne would have regarded with equanimity the obsolescence, or the quicker summary destruction, of some human creatures that were not (for him) *Men*. And, as a fact, no accused witch escaped the fagot through Sir Thomas's testimony.

"*They covered him over with a coat of white paint.*" This instructive atrocity—an everlasting example, and a warning, of the essential impertinence and silliness of what is called "taste," unless it is held lightly as a silly thing by those who have it, as the momentary complexion that is cast upon their minds by the shadow of their time, not an eternal principle to be projected backwards and forwards into history, nor made a law to judge humanity by in their own day—this infernal act of Malone and Company was perpetrated in 1793, the year following the September Massacres.

"*Poor Tobin*": seems to have lived in Barnard's Inn and to have been a solicitor and a would-be playwright; but it was his brother John who *was* the playwright. This (James W.) Tobin is spoken of by Coleridge, who also refers to his blindness and, perhaps on that account, calls him "poor Tobin," just as Lamb does. Howbeit, poor Tobin lent the philosopher ten pounds on one occasion; and gave him also a great deal of good advice in the presence of influential friends, which the philosopher naturally resented.

"*The common run of Lane's novels.*" Whether Lane was the Publisher of the kind of fiction here described, I cannot make out. More probably he was the purveyor at second hand only, as proprietor of the principal Circulating Library in London at the beginning of the century. In a letter to Manning in 1802 Lamb recommends the latter to read the Life of Benvenuto Cellini, if he has not read it already, and whimsically urges him (Manning being somewhere on the Continent at the moment) to "send for it immediately from Lane's circulating library." This impossible advice was penned, clearly, to make way for the remark which followed: "*It is always put among the romances, very properly.*" Thus Mr Lane suffered, at the hands of Charles Lamb, a kind of imputed authorship or responsibility for the light literature of his time, just as Mr Mudie is sometimes burdened with a similar charge in our day by critics who are relentless to the imbecility of human nature, and want to put the whole blame on somebody.

The Old Margate Hoy

("London Magazine," July 1823)

There is a fine confusion among the Editors here. Canon Ainger recognises the visit to Margate "in Lamb's boyhood," but ignores any other visit. Talfourd (here followed without protest by Mr Hazlitt) remarks upon the visit in September 1801,

and says it was probably the one referred to in this Essay. But since Lamb was about fifteen when the visit referred to in the Essay took place, the date must be 1790 or 1791. We may take it that there were at least two visits to Margate, one in 1790–91, the other in September 1801. The Essay itself bears the strongest imaginable internal evidences of such a *repeated* acquaintance with an essentially *strange* scene: it bears the freshness of a first and early impression, enriched by the detail and observation which an active, scrutinising, whimsical spirit—the spirit of the Letters of 1800–1802—would find in a set of circumstances whose *general* character was already long ago absorbed and assimilated, a part of his memory and his imagination. This Essay, the Reader will not fail to notice, seems written, for all its lightness of touch, from a remarkably full mind, and shows Lamb's powers in greater variety—in greater simultaneous ease and energy—than perhaps any one or two in either Series.

The Convalescent

("London Magazine," July 1825)

In the Letters of 1824–5 there are frequent references to failing health and actual illness; and a letter to Bernard Barton dated July 2, 1825 begins: "My dear B. B.—My nervous attack has so unfitted me that I have not courage to sit down to a letter. My poor pittance in the 'London' you will see is drawn from my sickness."

The Sanity of True Genius

("New Monthly Magazine," May 1826)

In the "Indicator" for November 24, 1819, Leigh Hunt had already discussed this topic and given contradiction, with circumstances for it, to Dryden's questionable couplet. It will be noticed that in this Essay the strictly scientific question—the question of cerebral pathology—is soon lost sight of, and the discussion is held in terms of abstract psychology and literary criticism. Therefore it would be very easy to mistake the point of merit here, the strong point of this famous little paper; and I think it has been generally mistaken. One might, in fact, grant everything that Lamb says, and yet accept Dryden's dictum as illuminating and scientifically exact. There has been a remarkable recrudescence of this topic in our own day, and we have seen the definition of madness made wide enough to engulf everybody with any habits or likings that are not those of a social automaton, or with any qualities not immediately useful to a butter-merchant: this by writers of the Lombroso school, especially Max Nordau. The truth according to Lamb has been re-asserted, as against these, by many, but with the greatest fulness of scientific and literary knowledge by Dr William Hirsch, in his book "Genius and Degeneration."

NOTES TO
"LAST ESSAYS OF ELIA"

if truthfulness of disposition and habit could safeguard a woman from lying when a great idea out of the past presented itself to her imagination, we should accept Miss Kelly's confidence in regard to this delicate matter with implicit faith. But human nature being what it is, and all good women romantic, we pay the sweetness of her nature the higher compliment of believing that she dreamt it, in the long day-dream of age and memory and happy thoughts.

"*As yet the 'Children in the Wood' was not.*" Not in 1743 or 4 certainly. It was produced at the Haymarket in October 1793 —quite in time to catch Miss Kelly, who was then in her third year, and who did, as a fact, play "the elder child in Morton's pathetic after-piece" some years later. So every touch in this Essay either states, or glances at, a bit of biography; and even the story of Mrs Porter's tears, if not true of her, is true of "some other great actress of that day"—Mrs Siddons, to wit.

The Tombs in the Abbey

("London Magazine," October 1823)

This was the concluding part of an Essay entitled *Letter of Elia to R—— S—— Esq.*, R. S. being Robert Southey. The whole Essay—one of the longest—with Notes thereon, will be found in "Critical Essays" (vol. iii. of this Edition).

Amicus Redivivus

("London Magazine," December 1823)

For George Dyer, the hero of this averted tragedy, see the Essay *Oxford in the Vacation* (vol. i. of this Edition). In describing his new situation to his friends after the removal to Colebrook Row, Lamb never fails to lay stress on the fact that the New River runs ("if a moderate walking pace can be so termed") by his little garden domain. If the letter to Hood, of this year, but uncertain date (Hazlitt, vol. ii. p. 135), is correctly placed, there is an unlucky presage in the words: "My old New River has presented no extraordinary novelties lately." Nevertheless, this particular extraordinary novelty was not actually witnessed by him, but by his sister Mary and their maid. It occurred at half-past one ("*bright noon-day*"), and "when I came home at four to dinner I found G. D. a-bed, and raving, light-headed with the brandy-and-water which the doctor had administered. He sung, laughed, whimpered, screamed, babbled of guardian angels, would get up and go home; but we kept him there by force; and by next morning he departed sobered and seems to have received no injury." W. B. Procter, who called a little after two, found "Dyer, unaccustomed to anything stronger than the crystal spring, was sitting upright in bed, perfectly

delirious. His hair had been rubbed up and stood out like so many needles of iron grey. 'I soon found out where I was,' he cried out to me, laughing; and then he went wandering on, his words taking flight into regions where no one could follow."

But if Lamb did not upon his own shoulders bear G. D. out of the "Middletonian stream," he seems to have effectually saved his life on another occasion. The account is rather long, but I will quote it here; for Cottle's "Reminiscences," though a valuable source-book, is yet by Cottle, and therefore not one of Great Nature's Stereotypes, and therefore unlikely to come into the hands of the general reader. It is to be premised that George Dyer had some young nieces, and that Lamb, on calling at Clifford's Inn once, had found the old scholar teaching one of these little girls to sing hymns: also that G. D. had a belief—to justify a necessary custom with him, perhaps—that people ought to eat sparingly and absorb much water-gruel.

"Mr. Coleridge," says Cottle, "related to me a rather ludicrous circumstance concerning George Dyer, which Charles Lamb had told him, the last time he passed through London. Charles Lamb had heard that George Dyer was very ill, and hastened to see him. He found him in an emaciated state, shivering over a few embers. 'Ah!' said George, as Lamb entered, 'I am glad to see you. You won't have me here long. I have just written this letter to my young nephews and nieces, to come immediately and take a final leave of their uncle.' Lamb found, on inquiry, that he had latterly been living on water-gruel, and a low starving diet, and readily divined the cause of his maladies. 'Come,' said Lamb, 'I shall take you home immediately to my house, and I and my sister will nurse you.' 'Ah!' said George Dyer, 'it won't do.' The hackney coach was soon at the door, and as the sick man entered it, he said to Lamb, 'Alter the address, and then send the letter with all speed to the poor children.' 'I will,' said Lamb, 'and at the same time call the doctor.'

"George Dyer was now seated by Charles Lamb's comfortable fire, while Lamb hastened to his medical friend, and told him that a worthy man was at his house who had almost starved himself on water-gruel. 'You must come,' said he, 'directly, and prescribe some kitchen stuff, or the poor man will be dead. He won't take anything from me; he says, 'tis all useless.' Away both the philanthropists hastened, and Charles Lamb, anticipating what would be required, furnished himself, on the road, with a pound of beef-steaks. The doctor now entered the room, and advancing towards his patient, felt his pulse, and asked him a few questions; when, looking grave, he said, 'Sir, you are in a very dangerous way.' 'I know it, sir, I know it, sir,' said George Dyer. The Dr. replied, 'Sir, yours is a very peculiar case, and if you do not implicitly follow my directions, you will die of atrophy before to-morrow morning. It is

the only possible chance of saving your life. You must directly make a good meal off beef-steaks, and drink the best part of a pot of porter.' 'Tis too late,' said George, 'but I'll eat, I'll eat.' The doctor now withdrew, and so nicely had Lamb calculated on results, that the steaks were all this time broiling on the fire! and, as though by magic, the doctor had scarcely left the room, when the steaks and the porter were both on the table.

"Just as George Dyer had begun voraciously to feast on the steaks, his young nephews and nieces entered the room crying. 'Good-bye, my dears,' said George, taking a deep draught of the porter. 'You won't see me much longer.' After a few mouthfuls of the savoury steak, he further said, 'Be good children, when I am gone.' Taking another draught of the porter, he continued, 'Mind your books, and don't forget your hymns.' 'We won't,' answered a little shrill silvery voice, from among the group, 'we won't, dear Uncle!' He now gave them all a parting kiss; when the children retired in a state of wonderment, that 'sick Uncle' should be able to eat and drink so heartily. 'And so,' said Lamb, in his own peculiar phraseology, 'at night, I packed up his little nipped carcass snug in bed, and, after stuffing him for a week, sent him home as plump as a partridge.'"

"*Waters of Sir Hugh Middleton.*" The New River, bringing water to London from the springs at Chadwell and Amwell in Hertfordshire, was the work of "Mister Hugh Myddelton," citizen and goldsmith, who "with his choice men of art and painful labourers set roundly to this business" in 1609, and received the honour of knighthood on the completion of his great undertaking in 1620. The stream still flows, but not to-day under the open sky in Colebrook Row, off the City Road.

"*The sweet lyrist of Peter House:*" the Poet Gray; Peterhouse, Cambridge, being his college.

"*The mild Askew.*" Anthony Askew, M.D., held the post of physician to Christ's hospital when George Dyer was a scholar there; but was known to his generation less as a doctor than as a man famed for classical interests and learning, and for linguistic erudition generally. He did much "to create the taste for curious manuscripts, scarce editions and fine copies," and having the means to gratify this taste in himself, he collected a great and valuable library of rare books and manuscripts in many languages. He interested himself in the scholastic career of young George Dyer, afforded him plentiful access to books, etc., but died at the age of 50, while G. D. was only 17 and still at Christ's; where he remained two years longer, after losing this good friend—doubtless a loss which affected all the after-circumstances of the poor scholar's life.

Some Sonnets of Sir Philip Sydney

("London Magazine," September 1823)

This was not given as an Essay in the "London," but as the first of a series of slighter, perhaps, mainly quotational contributions, to appear under the heading of *Nugæ Criticæ, by the Author of 'Elia.'* It was signed "*L.*"

"*W. H.*" William Hazlitt, in his lectures on the Literature of the Age of Elizabeth (delivered in 1819–20, published in 1821), had dealt with Sidney's *Arcadia* in the mood of a man who is irritated and therefore angry, and therefore contemptuous. The whole criticism, leading up to the epithets of "jejune, far-fetched and frigid," might rank as a curious example of what execution can be done by simply judging any piece of literature by an inadmissible standard; but in reality it expressed (one cannot but think) not so much Hazlitt's inner and absolute feeling, as arbiter of elegancies, so much as his dislike of that kind of man (the *very* fine gentleman, the aristocrat, the courtier, the hater of the profane vulgar) and whatever might come from him, however charming. The great critic was particularly unfortunate in this sally: for here he has had no followers, and even so staunch an admirer as Lamb instantly took the other side. We now know, also—what could not be so well known to Hazlitt or Lamb—that Sidney's sonnets, so far from representing a high pitch of barren intricacy and unnaturalness of emotion and phrase to which he had brought his mind and his art, are—when compared with precedent and then prevailing examples—so notable for nothing as they are for their truthfulness to the fact of personal feeling, and their attempt at directness. It was a great leap of originality (and may have even seemed a raw egoism, judged by the fashion of that time), and it meant a revolution in sonnetting, when a man like Sidney penned this one line:—

"Fool! said my Muse to me, Look in thy heart and write."

Thus Sidney's sonnets were, in a sense, the "Lyrical Ballads" of their era. For which, to be sure, had it been pointed out, W. H. would have liked them none the better.

"*That opprobrious thing.*" If this refers to nothing more unspeakable than the fact that Lord Oxford once called Sidney a puppy, then Lamb has surely been guilty for once of writing falsetto, of magnifying the term, of attempting to put more emotion into the matter than it will hold. To be a puppy is *ridiculous;* and to be called a puppy is an *insult*, even to a puppy. But the condition itself is too much a part of our humanity—too common an accident in the mental health-history or development of all men, too closely associated with growth and with the getting, if not with the having, of some of the best qualities of maturity—for *opprobrium* to attach to the person of whom it can be predicated.

And there's this to be said for puppies, that most of them are merely experimentalising, and on the way to become very good dogs; also, that he who has the ingenuousness to be an obvious puppy has seldom the sinister craft to become a cur.

Newspapers Thirty-Five Years Ago

("Englishman's Magazine," October 1831)

During the last few years of the Eighteenth Century and the first few years of the Nineteenth, Lamb was pretty continuously connected with the newspaper press of London. Except a few references in the "Letters," however, this Essay is practically our only source of knowledge in regard to his movements in that world. I am inclined to think that he talks too exclusively here about the littler things that he did; the daily half-dozen jokes, the occasional ruinous witticism. It is probable that there were intermittent attempts at larger things of which nothing has been said; and one important piece belonging to this newspaper era, now for the first time re-discovered, will appear in vol. iii. ("Critical Essays").

"*Dan. Stuart.*" Daniel Stuart, Editor of the "Morning Post." "Fate and wisest Stuart say *No*," remarks Lamb, of a contribution which his editor would not honour; and Coleridge somewhere says of this same Stuart that he knew *men*, if not *man*, better than anyone he had ever known.

"*Bob Allen.*" A Grecian at Christ's Hospital in Lamb's time, and mentioned in the Essay (vol. i. p. 43).

"*Fenwick:*" for the description of him as *Bigod*, see *The Two Races of Men*. Lamb refers to him in a letter (upon a serious occasion) as "a very old, honest friend of mine;" but other letters show him (without the latent humour that there may be here) in the light of a somewhat deleterious friend, and one who not only drank much but was a cause of much-drinking in others, to say nothing of other wastings of domestic substance that an old honest friend who is a constant caller—bringing always one or two more of his own kind with him—may effect.

Barrenness of the Imaginative Faculty in the Productions of Modern Art

("The Athenæum," January and February 1833)

The essentials of this criticism of Martin's "Belshazzar's Feast" are expressed in a short letter to Bernard Barton in June 1827; and in the following year, again in a letter to B. B., he instances "designs from Martin, engraved on copper by Heath, accompanied with verses from Mrs Heman's pen," as the kind

of atrocity which publishers will decide upon when planning "A splendid edition of the 'Pilgrim's Progress!'" Two months pass; and there comes a presentation copy of a new volume of Bernard Barton poetry, embellished by the spectacular Martin. Whereupon, not to wound anybody's feelings, the critic fairly surrenders the citadel of truth: "Martin's frontispiece is a very fine thing, let *C. L.* say what he please to the contrary!"

In a letter to Wordsworth, with respect to the present Essay, he says he is by no means an absolute admirer of the *Ariadne*, but that "in the composition it served me as illustrative."

Rejoicings upon the New Year's Coming of Age

("London Magazine," January 1823)

There is infinite variety in Lamb, and even in Elia, *pace* Lamb's own opinion, who complained of being somewhat hide-bound by the limits of that shadowy character. After we have had, as one would think, every kind of Essay, here we come upon one which is unlike all the rest—the very champagne of gay spirits, sparkling with an effortless effervescent zest that never ceases—dancing its way along, on indefatigable fairy feet, like a woodland fantasia, the melody only dying because it has gone into the distance, and the vision fading for us only because we cannot follow it—it, and its population of little people, the many Merry Days of all the year—into their own habitat in the heart of the wood, or at the back of the moon!

A few of the allusions have rather less actuality for us than they had for Lamb's first readers. The "*Cock-broth*" to which *Shrove Tuesday* helped the *Second of September* has reference to the custom of cock-throwing and cock-fighting, which, with football-playing and other games galore, made Shrove-tide the Carnival of Old England. In September, of course, partridge shooting begins; and is sure to be in full blast on the *Second*, should the First happen to have been a Sunday.

"*The Thirtieth of January*" was the anniversary of the execution of Charles I., and was celebrated by the Puritans (dear Christian souls!) by having a *calf's-head* to dinner that day. The word "*Restorative*," a little further on, reminds us that the whirligig of time brought in its revenges. On the merry "*Twenty-Ninth of May*," which was Charles II.'s birthday, loyal custom required the wearing of sprigs of oak and the decorating of houses with branches of the same, in commemoration of the salutary oak-tree of Boscobel into which Charles had climbed and so lived to fight, or at least be merry, another day.

The distressing altercation between Two Ladies in the next paragraph grew out of the fact that though the King (George IV., then reigning) was born on August 12, his Birthday was "held" on April 23; a delicate way which his admirers took of

insinuating that he was—like St. George and Shakespeare, into whose proper domain of the calendar they intruded him—a grand moral possession of his country, and the Glory of England.

The Wedding

("London Magazine," June 1825)

This appears to have been a memory-sketch—with the colourings and circumstantialities that the Elian intelligence would add where it did not find—of the marrying of Admiral Burney's daughter to her cousin, some four years earlier. If it was so, the Admiral did not long survive the loss of the "Junior presence," for in 1822 Lamb speaks of his death as having gone—with much else of recent happening—to lessen the total amount of friendship and sympathy in the world, to say nothing of taking all the fun out of whist: "What matters it what you lead, if you can no longer fancy him looking over you?" I may mention here that a recent writer on Lamb, Mr John Rogers, has suggested that the Admiral's wife was probably the original of "Sarah Battle" (see "The Academy," March 7, 1903). The identification scarcely convinces me, but Mr Rogers is certainly right in arguing that Lamb's "portraits" are often of the composite variety. So must these things often be, with a writer who is not a mere documentarian—who has, that is to say, apprehension, imagination and humour, and who either sees the features which are invisible to us, or supplies the truths that Nature has forgotten.

"*I fear I was betrayed into some lightness;*" as he certainly was, if we are to believe his own report in a letter to Southey, on another similar occasion. "I was at Hazlitt's marriage, and had like to have been turned out several times during the ceremony."

The Child Angel; A Dream

("London Magazine," June 1823)

"*The Loves of the Angels.*" This work was published early in 1823. In the previous year its author (Thomas Moore) had been in Paris during Lamb's visit to that city, and had, it would appear, taken it unkindly that Lamb had not called upon him. In his correspondence to a friend who communicated this to him, Lamb explained that he was very willing to meet Moore if invited to, and *shoula* have met him, had not the illness of the wife of a mutual friend caused a dinner engagement—that should have been the occasion of their coming together—to fall through. He added, characteristically enough, that the fact of his once having "had a hit" at Moore in the "London" in his name of Little "surely was reason sufficient not to volunteer a visit to him." On April 4 of this year (1823), however, he met Moore at last—along with Wordsworth, Coleridge and Rogers—at dinner in

Gloucester Place. Now Charles Lamb once asked somebody, with a look of amazement, how he could think it was possible to *hate* anybody *whom one knew;* and indeed, with him, to come within the circle of his acquaintance was to stand within the liberties of his love. Assuredly there was no colourable cause of hatred in Moore to be overcome, though the literary "sympathy" might be "imperfect" enough, so long as Lamb did not *know* him. But knowing him, having met him, the "gentle-hearted Charles" was not to be restrained from giving his book, as the saying goes, a lift; and so has associated the name, at least, of the "Loves of the Angels" with this less ambitious work of his own—a mere infant mite of a masterpiece—which is yet so incomparably more full of the strength of human interest and immortality.

Old China

("London Magazine," March 1823)

One of the inmost of that *inner circle* of Lamb's works, those which bring us acquainted with the history of his own mind and the circumstances of his home life at certain periods. The period of which he speaks here—the very straitened years of his and Mary's first housekeeping—is one which we must always regard with peculiar interest, with a curiosity that is begotten altogether of respect, and that will hardly presume to call itself sympathy. The Essay is one which, on all accounts—for its humanity, its grace and graciousness, its knowledge of human nature, beyond the merely personal reference, and its sweet and perfect art—is worthy of the deepest attention and a thirty-times perusal. The picture by Lionardo here called "*The Lady Blanche*" we shall meet again, both in the Poems and the Letters.

"*Dancing the hays.*" This was a mazy, winding, and tumultuous dance, very popular in Older England, and frequently mentioned by Elizabethan and later writers. Thus Heywood, in "A Woman Killed with Kindness":

"*Jen.* No; we'll have the 'hunting of the fox.'
"*Jack Slime.* 'The *hay!* the *hay!*' there's nothing like 'the *hay!*'"

So in "Love's Labour's Lost," Act V. sc. i.:

"*Dull.* I'll make one in a dance or so; or I will play
On a taber to the Worthies, and let them dance the hay."

It has been suggested that this dance was primarily associated with the getting in of the hay, just as a similar French dance called "les olivettes" was associated with the gathering of the olives.

NOTES TO

Confessions of a Drunkard

("London Magazine," August 1822)

This parlous and complicated *jeu-d'ésprit* has been a stumbling-block to all good people, including of course Editors and Biographers. It is a joke that has had misfortunes and has had evil things said of it; it has even been accused of being a sermon. Its reason-for-being has been wrongly construed; its essential flavour—the flavour which it had for Charles Lamb—has been missed; even about its age the truth has not been spoken until now. Its first appearance was not, as hitherto reported, in 1814, but in 1813. It was published in that year in vol. iii. of "The Philanthropist; a Repository for Hints and Suggestions calculated to promote the Comfort and Happiness of Man." Whether Lamb's friend Basil Montagu had to do with this well-meaning Miscellany, I do not know; but it is more likely that Lamb's writing of this Essay was the cause and not the consequence of their acquaintance. At any rate in the following year (1814) Montagu published "Some Enquiries into the Effects of Fermented Liquors. By a Water Drinker." This was mainly a compilation of testimonies against alcoholism, from the works of doctors, divines, and other respectable characters; and in that good company our "poor nameless egotist" appeared, almost literally as the drunken Helot or fearful warning; sounding his testimony, as it were, from the depths of degradation, or from beneath the table. This was the second—not, as hitherto supposed, the first—appearance. A re-issue of the Water Drinker's Enquiries in 1818, with the gallery of blameless characters and the one fearful warning as before, may count as the third publication of this "ephemeral piece," as Mr Fitzgerald calls it. It was of course impossible that an exhortatory and anti-potatory Work—or Tract—of Genius (the seriousness of which for the reader was enhanced by the animating presence and play of a spirit of humour in the writer, who had entered into his part with rare gusto and an enviable degree of knowledge)—it was impossible that it should have failed to have an arresting effect upon those stodgy and sober persons for whose edification such things are mainly written. Doubtless it had its anonymous notoriety, its obscure fame in the provinces. Four years later we find it, not reprinted, but copiously quoted from in a "Quarterly" article, and referred to as "a fearful picture of the consequences of intemperance." And of course that is what it had aimed at being, or at seeming, with a certain saving difference. But when the Reviewer went on to add, "which, we have reason to know, is a true tale," then what should have been a compliment was converted into an impudent slander levelled against a respectable City clerk and eminent writer of the time. This was in April 1822, when Lamb was in the heyday of his literary vogue and, in a sense, confessed fame. And though he saw no cause to be ashamed of

this early indiscretion of his—I mean the writing of the Tract, not the deleterious course of festivity of which the Tract portends to be the chronicle and the consequence—yet it was unpleasant to have the thing raked up in this way, divested (for a very large public) of its original anonymity, and used against him by the common enemy of all good men then living. Nevertheless, he took the gentlest imaginable way of defending himself: he had the Essay reprinted in the "London Magazine" for August, with his usual signature appended; and in a word to the Reader, in the correspondence-part of the Magazine, he asserted the merely literary genesis and motive of the Essay, referred to the ungenerous use lately made of it by "Messieurs the *Quarterly* Reviewers," and promised to string them up therefor, in a humorous fashion of his own devising, another time. Thus we have four appearances of this Essay in Lamb's lifetime. Fifthly, and lastly, it went "home, *forever*"—into "The last Essays of Elia." We cannot say, without qualification, that he placed it there; for it did not appear in the first edition of this book. But as Moxon inserted it in the second edition, published shortly after Lamb's death, we may be sure that he had the sufficient and only proper sanction for doing so—personal knowledge, to wit, that it was Lamb's own intention so to have done, when an opportunity next should offer.

That is its history, in five acts or stages. Its interpretation might with confidence be left to the good sense of the Reader, did not the mistakes of Editors warn one that good sense is capable of being thrown off its balance in the presence of this masterpiece. For instance, Mr Fitzgerald casts it indignantly forth from the *Elia* Series, exposing it to perish in the outer wilds where "Ephemeral Pieces, etc." are assigned their portion, their dubious inheritance of comparative infamy and semi-oblivion. "A piece obnoxious to him"—meaning Lamb—"for many reasons," exclaims Mr Fitzgerald. Where he gathered that knowledge I do not know; but the phrase reminds one of that consideration for Lamb's feelings which has caused Canon Ainger to drop out of his Edition altogether the *Vision of Horns* as a thing which "it would have cut him to the quick to think might be permanently associated with his name." In regard to the present Essay Canon Ainger's tenderness for Lamb's reputation has been more merciful to us, or his moral sense has seen an encouraging prospect of the evil thing being turned to good account. "The Essay," he says, "has sufficient reality in it to live as a very powerful plea for the virtue of self-restraint, and it may continue to do good service in the cause." Except for that closing aspiration (in penning which, I hope, the writer smiled) the Canon's remarks are quite temperate. But even he takes the Essay far too seriously, finds an unconscionable and illiterate quantity of reality in it, imputes to it far too much autobiographical meaning and honest confessional sincerity. The fun,

which is its sustaining motive, the revelling in the joke of being serious and improving, the yielding to the delights of the literary sense, the boundless pleasure of writing a burlesque so complete and so perilously fine that it shall seem to be no travesty but the serious Primary Thing itself—no levity, but Art or Morals in their unmitigated first intention—this he has entirely missed, or taken no account of. Yet one wonders that anybody could miss it; and yet again one wonders whether any can completely find and relish it, except those who, for their sins, are professional ephemeral writers themselves—by preference, such irresponsible hacks as may, like Lamb and other men since, have put their hands gaily to many serious things without feeling that they had an immediate call from Heaven thereto! But there is one simple test which brings out unmistakably the right tone, the true quality and generating principle, of this Essay: *one has only to read it aloud.* There are things which (as Lamb has somewhere pointed out) must be read by the breathing and the heart-beat if we would get their very meaning: which must be *articulated*, if only *inwardly articulated*, if we would hear their full music, as in the case of great poetry. But also there are other things, of which we may say that they are *written aloud;* that the feeling of delivering the words before an audience, the actor's sense, the pleasure of pose, the sub-consciousness of its being "all play," possesses the writer throughout, and is the very well-head of inspiration, flowing through every line. As the saint believed because the creed was impossible, so the humourist writes with conviction and delight because the thing is so manifestly untrue. Of this essentially elocutionary and histrionic kind of composition, the present Essay is the most subtle example known to me. Another famous example is that Prospectus of a certain Journal "Written for Gentlemen by Gentlemen" which Captain Shandon composed within his humble retreat in the neighbourhood of Ludgate Hill. The Gentlemen were expected to take it seriously of course: so were the first readers of our "poor nameless egotist." But that was the fun of the thing; just there was the inspiration; and without that feeling of the fun, that sense of a delightfully serious and probable rehearsal of things manifestly remote from circumstance and inherently idiotic, neither Captain Shandon nor Charles Lamb could have composed each his masterpiece of profound banter to such notable purpose—the Captain, seated upon the edge of his bed in a debtor's-prison, rallying the Gentlemen of England to the rescue of the State—Charles Lamb, with his cheerful bottle and his bit of bread and cheese on the table beside him, penning a joke which even at this time of day a Canon of the Church hopes "may live as a powerful plea for the virtue of self-restraint, and continue to do good service in the cause."

This, it seems to me, is the main truth in regard to this Essay; it is the end by which we must take hold of it; nor do I think

that any one who reads it articulately will fail to be saturated with its pervading humour, to catch its imitative accent, its accent of mockery, the *diablerie*, the naughtiness of this exhortation. That said, one must add, of course, that there are other aspects; that the Essay, being a work of Lamb's, and peculiarly a work of Lamb's more elfish humour, is therefore not a simple thing, but has its side-intentions, its complexities, its inevitable mystifications. The chief of these, and the one which has caused all the bother, is the fact that Lamb has taken delight in sailing as near the wind of truth as he could—not as he could without giving himself away (he was generous enough to have risked that), but as he could without destroying a work of art and fantasy by an impracticable infiltration of reality. The periods which he traces in the descent of his Drunkard are, mischievously enough, correspondent to periods in his own life, and not untinged by a reference (which doubtless he chuckled over) to actual facts and living men. Thus when he says, "About that time I fell in with some companions of a different order. They were men of boisterous spirits, sitters up a-nights, disputants, drunken; yet seemed to have something noble about them"—here, of course, he bases most documentarily upon a historical and known period of his life, when his "trusty friends" Fenwick and Fell and company were almost nightly callers, and when, consequently, there *was* too much sitting up a-nights for his body and mind's entire profit, and too much spirits and water consumed upon his premises, the host freely partaking with the guest, as a host should. Further on, again, there is a reference to his second group of acquaintances —Manning, and others of that better mental class—and to the habit of tobacco-smoking, which he actually learned at this time, and which, he being a hyperæsthetic subject, affected him powerfully and did his health no good. And such small instances. But, as he himself says, "how heightened! how exaggerated!" Surely the last word of the Editor on this subject should be to apologise to the Reader for saying so much about it, for giving him an explanation or a warning which he does not need, and for asking him, impertinently enough, not to read as a fool.

Popular Fallacies

("The New Monthly Magazine," January to September 1826)

Regarding them as a cluster of separate articles, one may say that these minimum works of Elia are the things which have counted for most in making the general or hazy notion of Lamb and his character which exists in the mind of the ordinary citizen; he, that is, who does not make a conscience of verifying his references or knowing the grounds of all his own opinions, literary or political. And had any one else written these short disquisitions, and nothing more, they would have been important

and his name would have lived by them. As it is, they serve a very pleasant purpose here. They are a sort of rapid *résumé* and march-past of the qualities which have been at play throughout the two volumes of Elia, and have the same effect here at the close of the book as that mustering of all the characters upon the stage at the end of a drama, nobody having anything very important to say, but their totality of presence making for remembrance and for good-humour and good-night.

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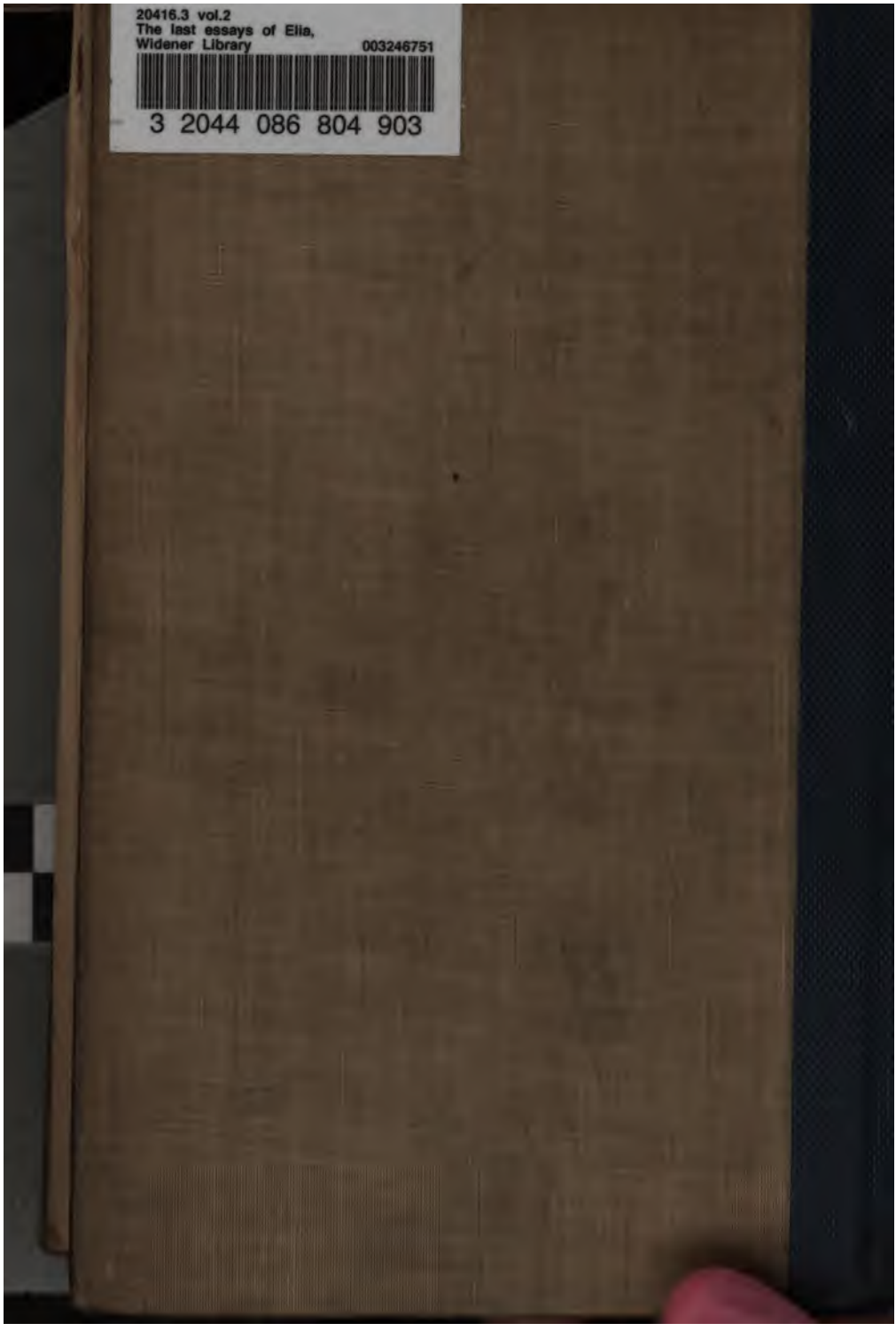
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